

Guidance from AmeriCorps for Preparing for Life After Your Corps Experience

As with other documents in TCN's Corpsmember Resource Library, this contains information from AmeriCorps and Serve DC which also applies to non-AmeriCorps Corpsmembers.



Alumni Resources

Use your AmeriCorps experience to find a new beginning. We offer resources for our members to take the next step after serving with AmeriCorps. Whether you served in an AmeriCorps State and National, VISTA, or NCCC program, [these resources are for you](#).

When you complete your service, you join a distinguished network of 1.2 million people who are leading communities through difficult challenges across the nation. Your experience sets you apart as a leader and puts you in a unique position to inspire and make lasting change for others—including your friends, family, and neighbors.

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Planning for Life After Your Corps Term

Before you know it, you will have completed your term of service. Whether you are a full-time or part-time AmeriCorps member, you may already be thinking ahead to the future.

This information was adapted from Serve DC and a workbook from AmeriCorps. It can help you lay out short-term and long-term plans, which will help you work through the transition from your Corps experience to the next step along your path.

AmeriCorps members, keep in mind that you have seven years from the date you earned your education award to use it. If you earn more than one, they don't all expire on the same date.

Self-Assessment & Goal Setting

It is never too early to start planning for your transition from your service. Begin considering how personal and professional goal setting for your current Corps position can be leveraged for the next steps.

As a first step, it is important to start defining who you are, where you would like to go, and what you need to do to get there. Here are some tips on how to get started:

- If you haven't already been through the Corps, create an individual development plan to outline goals and identify the support you need to be successful with your Corps position. Consider how you can use this plan to reflect on your interests, skills, and passion. Make "SMART" goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.
- Create a schedule and set aside time on a regular basis to research "Life After the Corps or AmeriCorps" opportunities. Hold yourself accountable by starting a peer group of Corpsmembers to regularly schedule check-ins or resource sharing. Remember that you are not the only one who is planning for post-service life.

- Begin to build a portfolio of work from your Corps service term(s). This portfolio could be useful as you prepare applications for school or provide examples for job interviews.
- Keep a journal about your service experience to reflect on.
- During your service term, track and quantify your service. This will make it easier for you to tell your “Corps/AmeriCorps Story” later in an interview, application, or on your resume.
- Seek a mentor in a field that you are interested in pursuing after your Corps term.
- Schedule an informational interview with someone in a field that you are interested in pursuing after your service term. You can ask questions about what steps that person took to get there.
- Start looking at job descriptions that interest you to decide how you might be able to set goals over your service term to decide what skills and experience you will need in the future. In reading lots of job positions and putting aside the ones that interest you the most, you can start figuring out the commonalities.
- During your service term, take on leadership roles that will challenge you and allow you to explore potential career options.
- Read LinkedIn profiles and think about which ones you are drawn to (and why) and what career paths get your attention.
- Start exploring which field or industry interests you and sign up for related newsletters, find social media to stay connected, and read relevant articles.

Networking

Increasing your social capital is an important step to getting connected to new opportunities. Networking can happen in formal and informal settings where you have an opportunity to share your interests and passions.

- Create and practice a Corps/AmeriCorps Elevator Speech: If you were explaining your service to someone for the length of an elevator ride, how would you concisely and clearly talk about your service? This will be helpful in any type of interview.
- Print business cards to hand out at networking events and meetings.
- Maintain a database of your contacts through your service term(s) and make sure that they have long-term email or contact information for you.
- Attend networking events where you can connect and make contacts.

- Example: [Young Nonprofit Professionals Network](#) and [AmeriCorps Alums](#)
AmeriCorps members should also be sure to keep their contact information, especially email address updated in the My AmeriCorps Portal.
- Consider joining a board or taking on a leadership role to demonstrate your talents, skills, and abilities. Example: [The Corps Network has Corps Alums on its Board of Directors](#)
- Create a [LinkedIn](#) account to get connected with potential employers, contacts, and alums, and more. Keep your LinkedIn account updated and stay connected to colleagues. There are also forums and groups to connect with on LinkedIn.
- Schedule informational interviews with contacts in your field of interest to make an in-person connection.
- Use existing relationships at your service site to get connected. As an example, you can connect with the Corps board of directors or project partners of your service site for informational interviews.
- Connect through social media but **be mindful of what information you have posted**. Consider the fact that many employers search sites like Facebook to learn about their potential staff.

Personal Finance

Throughout your term of service, budgeting is a necessity. It's also important to consider personal finance choices for your post-service transition as you plan for potential gaps in employment, moving to a new place (or staying where you served!), cost of living, or becoming a student.

- Create a budget to estimate costs for the first few months after your term of service. Research budget templates or use online resources like [Mint.com](#) to plan for how you will pay expenses after your Corps or AmeriCorps program.
- Set up an emergency fund – a fund where you can put aside between three and six-months' worth of post-tax income in case of an emergency. A strategy for not spending from this fund is to set it up in a different account from the accounts you use to pay expenses.
- Seek out resources like the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) which offers free tax help for taxpayers who qualify. Information on the programs can be found [here](#).

- Access member discounts if you join AmeriCorps Alums after your year of service. For an up-to-date listing of discounts see the [AmeriCorps Alums website](#).

Short Term Plans

Among your immediate decisions is the question of whether you will leave the community where you are serving. Some questions to ask include:

- Where will you move and why?
- Will you go alone or with others?
- What is your timeframe?
- What will you do to support yourself while you make longer-term decisions?
- If you aren't relocating, what will you do to manage your finances and focus your energy?
- Will anyone help you? Who?

These decisions are examples of the kind of short-term planning that lies ahead.

Long Term Plans

Other decisions concern long-term planning. For example, you may be giving a lot of thought to the career you will pursue. Certainly, this will be a decision with long-range implications. Once you establish your career goal, you will need to address some mid-range planning.

- Will you seek additional training?
 - If so, where will you get it, and how much will it cost?

Other longer-term planning might concern ways to move yourself closer to the region in which you eventually want to live.

Throughout your decision-making process, talk things over with others whose opinions you respect. Get feedback on your plans and ideas. By thinking and planning, you'll be able to make your decisions in a calm and reasoned way, rather than having them forced upon you.

As you search for your path:

- Plan your transition to your next step.
- Reflect upon the personal and professional growth you've experienced as a result of your AmeriCorps service.
- Assess your skills and accomplishments.
- Weigh your choices for what comes next; and
- identify resources and strategies for the transition and whatever you choose to do next.

Managing Your Transition

Whenever you find yourself working your way from “here” to “there,” you are going through a transition. When you left grade school to enter junior high, for example, you went through a transition—possibly a painful one. Passing from junior to senior high or from high school to college represents another transition, as does moving from one geographical region to another or from one job to another.

Whether these and other transitions ultimately lead to better or happier times, the process itself sometimes feels hard when you’re passing through it. Look at this period as a chance for continued growth and opportunity. If you give some thought and planning to your upcoming transition, you may find your path an easier one.

Going Home: Cross-Cultural Re-Entry

Many AmeriCorps members serve in their own communities, while others travel within their state or to other states for their terms of service. When people return to previously familiar surroundings after living in a different environment or culture for a time, they face what is called “cross-cultural re-entry.” Returning is not always easy. An AmeriCorps member who grew up in rural Texas and served in urban Chicago, for example, may find re-entry harder than expected if they return home for any length of time.

Often, people find coming home to be more difficult than the initial move to the other culture. Even people who have spent their AmeriCorps service in their home community may experience some “re-entry”. Especially if they have worked in a culture somewhat different from their own, or if family or friends have discounted or even dismissed their efforts.

In general, people returning home don’t expect a hard time. If the transition turns out to be difficult, they are surprised because the difficulty is so unexpected. Sometimes the surprise of reentry “shock” can lead people into depression during their transition. Typically, the stronger the desire to return home, the easier the transition will be.

Planning for re-entry can help to ease the transition. You may want to give some thought to the way you’ll describe your AmeriCorps service to your family, friends, and neighbors at home. Sometimes, the people you care about at home won’t be interested in your experience. Or perhaps they believe their culture is better than the one in which you served. Prepare to deal with that attitude or disinterest.

You may experience any of several stages of re-entry. You may begin to disengage from the AmeriCorps community while still in it. Your focus moves from the present to the future. Then comes the initial “home” period, which is usually full of goodwill and comfort. It feels good to be home. Next comes a middle period during which you may feel some discomfort with the home culture and may find yourself developing a negative attitude. In this stage, former members may

compare their home culture with their AmeriCorps culture and find their home culture lacking. Eventually, however, if they work patiently through the stages, they will likely achieve a positive integration of home and AmeriCorps experiences.

Your re-entry experience may be similar to the experience of people who return from service overseas or within cultures that differ from their own - - members of the armed forces or Peace Corps volunteers, for example. Often, these same people discover that the coping skills they used to adjust to another culture help them cope, as well, with returning home. Think back over the ways you got through the first few months at your AmeriCorps assignment. Transfer your new experiences and the expertise gained through AmeriCorps to your home, or your “old” situation.

Skills & Accomplishments

Almost any interview for college admission or a job will include questions about accomplishments and skills. People who can clearly describe their skills and accomplishments find themselves at an advantage in many situations.

Skills:

Think about the skills you learned or enhanced during your service term. These could include:

- Better organized
- More patient
- Diplomatic
- Helpful
- Punctual
- More out-going
- Public speaking skills
- Writing skills
- Budgeting

Make a quick list of some of the things you've learned and have been able to do. Start each entry with an action verb. Here are some examples:

- Conducted energy audits.
- Constructed homes.
- Built trails.
- Monitored program expenses. Kept program budget.
- Collected and recycled materials.
- Organized and conducted community service projects.
- Wrote a community newsletter.

Accomplishments:

What did you complete and/or achieve during your service?

Lead with an action word and be specific. Don't overstate or downplay what you've done. And don't forget to include all the training you've received (and used) as a Corpsmember. Here are some examples that may help you describe your accomplishments:

- Completed 10 weatherization projects.
- Participated in community trash recycling program that collected 1,000 pounds of materials for recycling.
- Completed 1,700 hours of community service in state and national parks.
- Completed 4 hours of training chainsaw training; 24 hours of FEMA training; 10 hours OSHA training; and 8 hours of Leave No Trace training. *Include any certifications or credentials.*

Continuing to Serve

Many Corps alums continue to serve after their Corps experience, to give back to their communities through all types of volunteer service.

Reflecting on your Service Term:

Throughout your Corps experience, you have prepared for and provided service while reflecting on the experience. Throughout your life, you will find that you will continue to reflect on this very special experience.

Understanding the full meaning of your Corps experience will take time—possibly a lifetime. If that seems far-fetched, think back to a particular situation, something significant that took place during your first month or two of service at the Corps. Was there a clarifying moment? A crisis? A time when you questioned your decision to join the Corps? Consider that moment. How did you make sense of the situation at the time? Since then, have you changed your view of the situation? How?

Very possibly, the way you view the situation now is somewhat different from the way you viewed it at the time. You are a more seasoned Corpsmember now; your perspective and attitudes, maybe even the way you act, have changed. This type of reinterpretation of your Corps experience will continue, perhaps for the rest of your life.

Former participants of other service programs are often amazed at the staying power of the meaning of their service, and the way that it changes and expands over time. Decades later, former Peace Corps volunteers' perceptions, actions, attitudes, and lifestyles remain affected by

their service abroad. The Corps Network's member Corps are modeled on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program started in the 1930s during the Depression, through which more than 10 million young Americans participated in building and conservation work on important projects when jobs were scarce. Veterans of the CCC remembered their service with pride.

Although it's too early to tell, you too may experience a similar effect changing the framework of your AmeriCorps service over time. Throughout your life, your Corps experience will probably influence your choices about career, family, community, civic responsibilities, and lifestyle.

What Motivated You Then; What Motivates You Now

Members have different motivations for joining a Corps. Most members have more than one motivation, including the opportunity to serve their communities and their nation, to develop skills and experiences for future work, and to take advantage of the educational benefits.

Before you lock yourself into something, however, why not spend some time really thinking things through?

- Self-assessment.
- Research and gather information.
- Decision making and goal setting.

Self-Assessment

Nearly all of us have at some time received this message: Know who you are. Before plunging into your plans, spend some time getting to know yourself a little better.

Questions to address:

- What opportunity will you look for personally and professionally? Will it be school, a job, or something else entirely?
- What are the ideal qualities and components that you would like in your next opportunity?

Tasks to complete:

- Identify your values, skills, interests, accomplishments, and personal considerations.
- Begin to describe generally what you are seeking in your next opportunity.

Skills

Skills come in a variety of forms. We all have them, although they differ from person to person.

Self-Management Skills

Certain personality traits, developed through experience and rooted in your temperament, are those you use to manage yourself—whatever the setting. These traits can and do affect work habits. Sometimes self-management skills are also known as adaptive skills or personality traits. (In speech, they are often expressed as adjectives.)

Transferable Skills

Among the skills you now have are those you can transfer. Transferable skills—skills related to performance and ability—can be used in (transferred to) many different types of work and organizations. These skills, which apply to people, data, and things, are often called functional skills. (In speech, they tend to be expressed as verbs.)

Special-Knowledge Skills

These skills, learned through education, training, and/or on-the-job learning, relate to special work situations. For example, a budget analyst may be required to have accounting skills. Accounting is a special-knowledge skill—not everyone has it, and it is not necessarily transferable to many other types of work. Other examples of special-knowledge skills are emergency medical assistance, personnel administration, child development, plumbing, natural resource management, law enforcement, heavy-equipment maintenance, and newsletter design skills. (Special-knowledge skills are usually expressed as nouns.)

Interests

Another major area of self-assessment concerns interests. How do you spend time when you can do what you want to do? What would you do with your time if you won the lottery and didn't have to earn money any longer?

- Realistic types like skilled trades such as plumber, electrician, and machine operator; they like to use skills such as those needed by airplane mechanics, photographers, draftspersons, and some service occupations.
- Investigative types like scientific-related work such as chemist, physicist, mathematician, laboratory technician, computer programmer, and electronic worker.
- Artistic types like artistic work such as sculptor, designer, artist, music teacher, editor, writer, and musician.

- Social types like education pursuits such as teacher and college professor, and social service positions such as social worker, rehabilitation counselor, and professional nurse.
- Enterprising types like managerial and sales positions such as personnel, production manager, and life insurance, car, or real estate salesperson.
- Conventional types like office and clerical work such as teller, accountant, secretary, receptionist, and credit manager. The following table describes and compares each Holland type further.

Accomplishments

You have had many opportunities to work hard and accomplish a lot as a Corpsmember. Sometimes, however, it is difficult for alumni to describe their service in terms understood by employers, admission officers, and others who are unfamiliar with Corps or AmeriCorps. You need to think and write about your accomplishments as a Corpsmember or AmeriCorps member in language that most people will understand.

Personal Considerations

Each person's personal considerations are unique; yours will influence your next step after your Corps experience. For example:

- Are you committed to staying where you are, or can you relocate?
- Do you need childcare?
- What salary level do you require?
- Do you have special medical, social, and/or personal needs that can be met only in certain areas?
- Do you need to live near family members for a particular reason?
- What will you seek in your next step, and what can you not do without?

There are many sites to help you research career-related decisions. Below are sites that can help you find opportunities:

[Job Hunter's Bible](#)

Richard N. Bolles, author of the *What Color is Your Parachute?* series, is on-line through this address. He candidly reviews many other sites—job vacancies, career counseling, and other related sites for you. Check it out and take his advice seriously.

[Monster.com](#)

This is an on-line job center.

[USAjobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov)

This U.S. Office of Personnel Management site lists federal government vacancies worldwide. Former AmeriCorps members interested in jobs with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Education, and other federal employers can get very specific and helpful application and vacancy information there.

On-Site Experience. Other ways to gather information directly are to intern, volunteer, and/or “shadow” people who work in the jobs/career fields/occupations in which you are interested.

Decision Making & Goal Setting

After completing your research, you are ready for some decision-making and goal-setting tasks. These will help you decide which career field(s) or type(s) of job(s)/occupation(s) you are going to seek—or which options you will choose for your next step. Then you can set some goals. If the option you are considering is something other than employment, apply the information and suggestions to your own pursuits.

Questions to Address

- What will be the focus of your job search?
- How will you describe your plans to prospective employers?
- What steps will you take to reach your goals?
- How long will you give yourself to achieve your goals?

Tasks to Complete

- Narrow the focus by integrating the self-assessment and research information you have gathered.
- Set some specific and realistic goals for yourself. Write them out in such a way that you can measure your progress.
- Create a realistic timeline for your goals.
- Begin to “own” your focus/decision by talking about it.

Option: Continuing your Service

One option is to enroll in a second term of service with your Corps or AmeriCorps program. Because policies concerning re-enrollment vary among programs (especially in AmeriCorps), check with your program leader or supervisor or the state commission for current information.

Returning to the same program. Most Corps allow regular Corpsmembers to serve a second term – either consecutively or after a break in service. Check with your supervisor or other Corps staff.

Although multiple AmeriCorps terms are possible, program directors have no obligation to re-enroll any AmeriCorps member. To be eligible for an additional AmeriCorps term, members must satisfactorily complete the first term of service (which will likely include a good performance review, among other program-specific expectations).

- Be familiar with the terms and limits of AmeriCorps service for eligibility for the Education Award if you are considering another AmeriCorps term (see TCN’s publication on “Using the Ed Award...” in the Corpsmember Resource Library).
- Seek out additional service opportunities by talking with other AmeriCorps members about their service experiences or get recommendations from your supervisor.

Enrolling in another Corps or AmeriCorps program. Whether a regular Corpsmember or an AmeriCorps member, if you want to enroll into a regular Corpsmember slot at a different Corps, go to The Corps Network’s [Find a Corps page](#) for a state by state listing of Corps and check out the Corps individual websites.

- Research international service opportunities. Example: [Peace Corps](#)
- Consider an international or domestic fellowship. Example: [Atlas Corps](#)
- Approach your research for international or domestic service opportunities through informal routes like connecting with like-minded individuals involved with social change on websites like [CouchSurfing.com](#).

AmeriCorps members seeking to enroll in a different program will have to do the legwork to find that program. Your program director or the state commission may be able to help you [find AmeriCorps positions](#) for the next year.

The main differences among AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*NCCC positions are outlined in a handout, *Summary of Programs*, available from the AmeriCorps recruiting office. The handout can be obtained on the [AmeriCorps website](#) or by calling 1-800-942-2677. The handout also indicates how to apply for each program.

Your Motivation

Why are you considering a second term of service?

- Do you want to complete a project you started in your first term?

- Do you want a similar experience in a different community?
- Will you gain new knowledge or skills? Be clear about your motivation, both with yourself and with program directors/staff.

If your reasons for wanting to re-enroll are not totally clear to you, review your self-assessment, which may help you decide what option is best for you—maybe it's another year of service, but maybe not.

Option: More Education and/or Training

Here are a few tips and recommendations for Corpsmembers and AmeriCorps members thinking about going or returning to school after the service term. **Also check out documents in TCN's Corpsmember Resource Library for specific options such as trade schools and non-traditional higher education.**

A key purpose of AmeriCorps is to further the education of AmeriCorps members. As you know, a major benefit of your service will be your education award—which you may use at any point within seven years of completing your AmeriCorps term of service.

As you consider how you will use your AmeriCorps award, please bear in mind that - in this country, at least - the more education workers have, the more they often make in salary. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, these were the weekly salaries by level of education for full-time wage and salary workers over twenty-five years of age. (These statistics refer to all genders and races in 1994.) Notice the regular increase of average salary as educational levels rise, particularly the change from high school graduate to college graduate.

A few of the points below are AmeriCorps specific.

- Look into how you can best leverage your Education Award and seek out information from the campus financial aid office if you would like to look into allowable cost of attendance expenses.
- Find out if the institution offers academic or other incentives to AmeriCorps members to include academic credit, preference for scholarships, waived application fees, or discounted housing fees.
- Research schools and universities that actively recruit AmeriCorps Alums and match the Education Award. Here is [a list of these institutions](#). Also directly contact listed institutions to verify the match or benefits offered.
- Visit a campus in person and seek out opportunities to talk with students and faculty.

- Attend a grad school fair to talk with campus representatives. [Idealist](#) offers graduate school fairs at least annually in many major cities.
- Start researching application deadlines early to ensure that you will have materials in place.
- Consider informational interviews with contacts in fields of interest to determine options for education programs and degrees.
- Consider if you need the degree to get into your field of interest and if you do, think about the cost and time involved.

Job Search/ Employment

These recommendations are for AmeriCorps members as well as non-AmeriCorps members exploring employment after the service term. **Be sure to check out Apprenticeship and Jobs doc in TCN's Corpsmember Resource Library.**

- Get organized and create a chart/spreadsheet of places where you applied, point of contact, and application deadline to track your job applications.
- Anticipate that the job application process may be long and explore temporary options as you search (such as temp agencies that place individuals in short-term employment at nonprofits or in specific fields or industries).
- Seek out opportunities within Corps-related organizations. This can be done through the [AmeriCorps website](#) or through [The Corps Network's job postings](#).
- Research options for utilizing college career centers. If you're researching away from where you went to school, there may be an opportunity to find out whether or not your campus and a local campus can establish an agreement for you to utilize alumni resources like job search databases.
- Seek out job shadowing opportunities.
- Consider [jobs in federal government](#), state government, or city government. In some cases, you can set up alerts that send updates to your email account on a regular basis based on search terms, type of job, and location.

- Search job boards on websites like Vistacampus.org, AmeriCorpsAlums.org, Idealist.org, OPAjobs.com and Indeed.org. In some cases, you can set up alerts that send updates to your email account on a regular basis based on search terms, type of job, and location.
- Keep informed about the field that you want to go into and learn about current trends or organizations that are in your field of interest. Resources for nonprofits include the Nonprofit Times, the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington, and the Center for Nonprofit Advancement.
- Research salary and employer reviews on websites like Glassdoor.com or Payscale.com. Consider the transition from an AmeriCorps living stipend to a salaried job and research salaries in the field you are pursuing. Also, consider benefits packages when reviewing opportunities.
- Consider Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status when applying for federal jobs for one year if you are an AmeriCorps VISTA member.

Questions to Address

- How can you best represent yourself to prospective employers?
- What strategies are most effective for your job search?
- Who will help you with your job search?

Tasks to Complete

- Develop an action plan.
- Write a basic resume.
- Network, network, network!
- Target employers who hire people who do what you want to do.
- Apply for work formally and informally.
- Practice interviewing.
- Interview.

Resumes

It is important for AmeriCorps members to capture and quantify their service year in a clear and powerful way. Although several types of resume formats exist, the two most common are chronological and functional.

Chronological. In the chronological resume, job seekers describe their skills, accomplishments, and experience. They list these by job, starting with the most recent and working backward. You probably should use the chronological resume unless you have a compelling reason not to.

Functional. Not all employers like this form of resume, though it helps career-changers or generalists show what they can do for a new employer. The functional resume lists skills and accomplishments by skill area, rather than by job. Actual job titles, organizations, and years of employment appear in a separate section. Even if you decide that a functional resume is best for you, you should create a chronological resume as well. Some prospective employers will ask for the chronological type eventually, even if they accept the functional at first. Keep your resume to one page if possible. If you have worked for more than ten years, go to two pages, but remember that the second page will get little attention.

Here are some tips and strategies for creating a strong resume:

- Consider translating your resume into “non-Corps/AmeriCorps terms” and avoid using lingo.
- Consider how the skills you developed during AmeriCorps translate to the opportunity that you’re seeking.
- Use action words and focus on the impact of your service.
- Proofread your resume and ask one or two additional people to edit it.
- Keep the format clean and easy to read.
- Be specific about your accomplishments and quantify them whenever possible.
- Put yourself in the position of someone who will read 100 resumes and consider what will make yours stand out from the rest. Try to keep it to one page.
- Frame your Corps/AmeriCorps term(s) as professional experience on your resume.
- Create a “Master” resume that lists all of your experiences, education, and awards so you can modify it to apply for a specific position as needed.
- Always submit a cover letter **unless** the application instructions state that one is not needed.
- Always tailor the cover letter for individual positions.
- Create cover letters that “sell” you and your accomplishments. It should be clear and concise.
- Be prepared to be asked for references and ask permission of your references to share contact information.

- Be prepared to be asked for letters of recommendation.

Interviewing

Telling your Corps/AmeriCorps story can be part of your interview process where you are sharing your strengths and accomplishments to demonstrate how they can relate to a new opportunity. Here's a little advice on how to approach having an interview.

- Follow up after all interviews with an email or phone call to thank the interviewer for their time.
- Be prepared for an interview with examples of your accomplishments and tell a story.
- Do research on the organization where you are interviewing and prepare questions for the interviewers.
- Practice and ask a friend or colleague to interview you to anticipate questions that will be asked during the actual interview.
- Be on time.
- Don't be afraid to admit if you do not have specific experience but demonstrate how you plan to get there.
- Research common interview questions and prepare answers.
- Consider how your Corps/AmeriCorps service translates to non-service positions by sharing transferable skills such as management, leadership, and developing resources.
- Be prepared with a short explanation in case the person interviewing you is not familiar with Corps and/or AmeriCorps.

Readjustment or New Transition

Sometimes job seekers get stuck in a search and need to readjust their strategies or begin the process again, both of which can be disheartening. If this happens to you, it may mean that you need to put more attention into the self-assessment and research phases of the job search process. Do them again if you didn't spend much time on those two phases. After doing so, if you remain stuck, talk to a professional career counselor, who may be able to help you get "unstuck" more quickly than you can on your own.

After a successful job search, you may enjoy your new job for quite a while. Eventually, however, most people decide to look for another job either within or outside the organizations in which they currently work. They begin new job searches and enter new transitions.

Sometimes, forces beyond their personal control thrust job-holders—even those content with their jobs—into another job search. For example, one spouse is transferred to another city, but both want the family to live in one place. Or someone's job is eliminated because of budget cuts or a merger. Such forces, which are pretty much beyond their control, can put people back into the job search process.

Questions to Address for an Unsuccessful Job Search

- What steps did you skip or not pay attention to?
- What is keeping you from being successful as a job seeker?
- Who can help you figure out what went wrong and how to correct it?

Questions to Address for New Transition

- How do you feel about this new transition?
- What can you do to get control of this situation (if the transition was imposed, not chosen)?
- What is different from your previous job search? (For example, you may have developed some new skills that you want to use in your next job.)
- What is the same as in your previous job search? (For example, your values or priorities may not have changed.)
- What was satisfying and not satisfying at your most recent job?

Task to Complete

- Begin the self-directed job search cycle again.

Being Smart at your New Job

If you find yourself at phase six, you have fulfilled your goal of finding employment. Now, having found it, you are ready to think about making your new job a success.

Questions to Address

- What do you want to get out of your new job?
- What steps can you take to be sure your new job is a success?
- How can you make the best of the opportunities that exist at your new workplace?

Tasks to Complete

- Understand and operate successfully within the culture of the new workplace.
- Understand and make use of learning and training opportunities.
- Find and benefit from a mentor.
- Be realistic about your aspirations.

- Deal with any conflicts at the new workplace.
- Enjoy the new workplace.

New Job Jitters

If you have enjoyed your Corps or AmeriCorps experience, you may find it hard to leave. This has been a setting in which you've been successful, challenged, and supported, and in which you've probably had fun. Starting all over again may have limited appeal, to say the least. Moreover, Corpsmembers often have earned some status in their communities. Giving that up to become a new person in another organization can be hard.

As anyone who has started a new job knows, entering a new and unknown workplace can be tough. New responsibilities, new co-workers, a new supervisor - all these can be daunting at first. Combining a great deal of challenge and little perceived support (it may be there but may go unrecognized), a new job can be the source of considerable anxiety for a while.

Unrealistic Expectations

As you begin a new job, try to guard against unrealistic expectations. Sometimes, new employees assume that their skills and knowledge qualify them for work beyond their capabilities and experience. In other words, their reach is somewhat beyond their immediate grasp. Be realistic about what you offer, and work from there.

No magic strategies exist to move you from entry-level clerk to president of an organization in two years. However, it's true that hard work, continual learning and upgrading of skills, and a good attitude can help you move up. But moving up is a mostly gradual process in today's market. Creating a life with economic benefits - a home, car, education for your children, etc. - is a difficult task, and one that doesn't happen overnight or without a great deal of commitment and hard work.