



Project POWER/AmeriCorps

Partner Handbook

August 2017 - July 2018



Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County

50 South French Broad Ave, Suite 246

Asheville, NC 28801

Project POWER/AmeriCorps Overview 2017-2018

Project POWER (Putting Opportunity Within Everyone's Reach) is a State AmeriCorps program supported by the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The program has been operated by Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County for the past 19 years. The mission of Project POWER is to engage national service participants in meaningful opportunities to provide increased academic enrichment to socio-economically disadvantaged students in Western North Carolina as well as increase the sustainability of area organizations to provide families in-need with increased access and knowledge of basic needs resources including food/food security. If children are given resources to succeed in school both inside and outside their classrooms for an early age, they are more likely to complete their education and have more opportunity later in life to achieve and thrive.



Children First/Communities In Schools intends for AmeriCorps members to prescribe evidence-based initiatives to support students in and out of school following the A + B + C and P/O model of Communities In Schools. These elements are attendance, behavior, coursework, and parent engagement as well as a category of other to include assistance for families to access basic need resources. Future AmeriCorps members will serve in full-time positions in one of two roles: Academic Enrichment Specialist or Community Resource Specialist to interface with students and families in these areas. See attached service descriptions to learn more about these roles.

AmeriCorps members provide organizations with increased support to serve students and families across Western North Carolina. Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County seeks out meaningful service activities for our members to participate in as they bring support and sustainability to an organization. Placements are not intended to replace or duplicate existing staff or volunteer positions. They are meant to enhance the work an organization is already doing and fill in needs that organizations are unable to meet without a member at this time.

Full-time members are to serve 1,700 hours or approximately *37.5 hours/week* starting August 7th, 2017-July 30th, 2018. Members receive on-going professional development training arranged by Project POWER staff, a living stipend of \$13,100 paid in 11.5 installments, health insurance, potential access to food stamps, and an education award of \$5,815 upon successful completion of their service year.

AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities were created by Congress through the Corporation of National and Community Service. Members may do these activities in their free time but are not allowed to

participate in these activities as a requirement of service. They are additionally not allowed to manage volunteers or others who participate in these activities during their service hours. Please see the attached list of attached Prohibited Activities to learn more.

Beyond providing meaningful service opportunities for AmeriCorps members, Project POWER asks sites to designate a full-time staff member to supervise the member(s) on site. These supervisors are responsible for: reviewing monthly member timesheets, completing monthly in-kind timesheets for their own hours, attend beginning of service year training, participate in quarterly partner meetings, and remain in contact with Project POWER staff should any issues arise with an assigned member. Sites outside of Buncombe County will also be encouraged to assist Project POWER staff in the recruitment of their AmeriCorps member.

Sites are also asked to provide a financial contribution to host an AmeriCorps member. See below for pricing for a 2017-2018 Project POWER:

- **Full-time member:** \$9,500
- **Morning only member:** \$4,300 (approx. 8 am-12 pm, Sept.-May)
- **Afternoon member:** \$5,200 (approx. 2pm-6pm Sept.-May, full-time in the summer)

Note: Member trainings and service reflection generally take place on Friday mornings. On occasion, members participate in mandatory service events that also require them to be away from their sites throughout the week. An element of flexibility is required when considering the schedules suggested above.

Project POWER/AmeriCorps programming is dependent and contingent upon the availability of federal funding.

Responsibilities of Project POWER/AmeriCorps Staff

- Recruit, interview, and screen AmeriCorps applicants;
- Perform Criminal History checks and Sexual Offenders checks on both AmeriCorps members and site supervisors per the guidelines from the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Orientation and training to members and site supervisors regarding AmeriCorps and Project POWER;
- Ongoing site and member support (at least one site visit per quarter, regular phone calls, and electronic contact);
- Hold regular meetings to support AmeriCorps members in professional development, system collaboration, and the planning and implementation of direct services activities;

- Media contacts about members and their service;
- Member payroll and accounting systems;
- Required evaluation of the AmeriCorps program;
- Administration of grant funds for members' living allowance, insurance, training, travel, and other member support costs.

Service Site Responsibilities

Program Requirements

- AmeriCorps member(s) will only be used to provide services that support Project POWER's program goals and objectives.
- Formulate an accompaniment plan for background check waiting period; provide letter of background check approval of supervising staff member, supply staff member to physically accompany AmeriCorps member(s) around individuals in vulnerable populations during waiting period.
- Formulate a plan for how to use member(s) for 40 hours per week during the summer (May to July)
- Agree to treat AmeriCorps member(s) as part of the organization's staff team. AmeriCorps members should attend staff meetings, be formally introduced to all staff, and be invited to participate in agency trainings, if appropriate.
- Define, explain, and recognize the service of your AmeriCorps member(s) and your collaboration with AmeriCorps within your agency as a way to promote understanding of the AmeriCorps involvement at your agency.
- Support the AmeriCorps policy regarding member(s) wearing AmeriCorps service gear and identifiers during designated service hours.

Administrative Requirements

- Provide Children First/Communities In Schools a salary letter and job description for member supervisor by September 1st, 2016.
- Provide members with timely information so that they can complete their reports to Project POWER/AmeriCorps, including:
 - review and approve monthly time sheets
 - document and submit in-kind donation reports monthly
 - submit written member evaluations two times a year

- Notify Project POWER/AmeriCorps staff immediately if any member has more than one unexcused absence or tardiness, or you become concerned about your member's professional behavior.
- Discuss the Project POWER Performance Measures with members at your site; establish and uphold accountability standards set through this process.
- Provide office space, computer use and office equipment equal to the tasks in the members' position description. Phone and internet use are required so members can communicate with Project POWER staff and community contacts. Regular email access is required.
- Participate in site visits and evaluation activities, including visits by Project POWER staff and possible site visits from the North Carolina Office of Volunteerism and Community Service or other State and National AmeriCorps officials.
- Release AmeriCorps member(s) to attend mandatory trainings and meetings as needed.
- Release AmeriCorps member(s) to perform community service events as needed.
- Release AmeriCorps member(s) for statewide, mandatory AmeriCorps National Identity Days.
- Notify Project POWER staff of any changes made to the member's position description, activities, or support prior to making the change.

Supervisory Responsibilities

- Generate a schedule for the AmeriCorps member(s), assuring that the schedule allows them to meet program goals and objectives. Member activities MAY NOT INCLUDE CLERICAL WORK, RESEARCH, FUNDRAISING, or LOBBYING ACTIVITIES. Positions are intended to be direct service oriented and members should only take part in specified Capacity Building activities outside of their direct service duties.
- Designate one site supervisor to guide the AmeriCorps member(s) while they are in service at your location.
- Complete Mid-Year (January-all sites) and End-of-Year (May-school sites; July-year-round sites) evaluations; meet with AmeriCorps member(s) and AmeriCorps staff individually to discuss performance.
- Send at least one representative to the Project POWER site supervisor orientation and regular, quarterly meetings. These meetings will be opportunities to clarify procedures, share ideas and resources, and discuss ideas.

Site Supervisor Responsibilities

- Regularly (at least weekly) check in with the AmeriCorps member(s) to provide guidance, assistance, information, resources, and feedback.
- Review and support Project POWER/AmeriCorps policies and procedures. A copy will be given to each service site.

- Introduce the members to organization's personnel and procedures. Mentor and monitor relationships between members and staff with whom they serve.
- Give member(s) appropriate guidance in specific development needed for their daily assignments.
- Complete written evaluation of AmeriCorps member(s) performance and share evaluation in a conference with member and Project POWER staff twice a year. Forms will be provided.
- Be available for communication with Project POWER staff.
- Verify AmeriCorps member's schedule and electronically sign their time sheet monthly.

Failure to uphold these expectations may result in Project POWER terminating the relationship. It is the sole discretion of Project POWER to remove the AmeriCorps member from your site at any point during the relationship and to terminate its relationship.

Member Living Allowance

Project POWER will provide a living allowance of \$13,100 to your full-time AmeriCorps member for the term of service. The living allowance stated above does not include the Education Award of \$5,815 before taxes, which the AmeriCorps member will receive from the National Service Trust upon graduation from the program. Members are required to complete a minimum of 1700 hours of direct service, trainings, service learning, disaster response, etc. to graduate from the program.

Other In-Service Benefits

Your AmeriCorps members will receive the following benefits:

- A. FICA: Unless exempt, Children First/Communities In Schools must make FICA payments on your member's living allowance.
- B. Income Taxes: Children First/Communities In Schools will withhold personal income taxes from your member's living allowance.
- C. Worker's Compensation Insurance is provided to the members.
- D. Health Care Coverage: Full-time members are eligible for individual health care coverage through a grant from the Corporation for National Service.

Member-Staff Relations

In order to maintain healthy working relations with the AmeriCorps member(s) placed at your organization, you are required to maintain a professional relationship with the member(s). Supervisors are prohibited from engaging in any sexual behavior with a member.

Grievance Procedure

If problems arise involving Project POWER members, you are asked to contact the Program Coordinator at 828-259-9717. If grievances arise, site supervisors are to document issues in writing as they happen and share documentation with the Program Coordinator.

Documentation may include dates, times, and examples of incidents as well as confirmation of receiving and sharing documented issues. He or she will schedule a meeting with the parties and help to mediate a solution. A copy of the Project POWER Grievance Procedure is included in the member's copy of the Policy and Procedures Manual which will be provided to you.

Release and Dismissal Process

If you determine a need to dismiss an AmeriCorps member, Project POWER requires you to:

- Contact the Project POWER Program Coordinator to discuss the concerns regarding the member.
- Meet with the Program Coordinator and member to discuss the possibility for finding a solution to the problem. If reasonable attempts to resolve the issues have been unsuccessful, the site placement supervisor must submit in a written document outlining reasons for requesting dismissal.
- Complete all required evaluations and paperwork.

Project POWER is not required to consult with a partner agency when determining if an AmeriCorps member will be released from the program. **If a member is terminated from the program, the partner agency may not hire the member for a period of 6 months after the termination.**

Project POWER AmeriCorps 2017-2018

Member Service Descriptions

Academic Enrichment Specialist:

Purpose: Project POWER (Putting Opportunity Within Everyone's Reach) is a State AmeriCorps program operated by Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County to provide increased enrichment, mentoring services, and access to basic needs to vulnerable youth in Western North Carolina. Full-time members will provide 1,700 hours of service over the course of one year (August 7th, 2017-July 30th, 2018) in activities such as providing small group literacy tutoring, classroom assistance, facilitation of after-school programming, STEM curriculum development and implementation, volunteer coordination, and community outreach to increase food security to families regionally. Members will directly serve students and provide capacity building initiatives in increase services provided to low-income families. Project POWER staff will provide on-going member and host site training through team meetings, webinars, site visits, and conference calls. Full-time Project POWER members receive a \$13,100 living stipend paid over 11.5 installments, health insurance, and an education award of \$5,815 upon successful completion of service.

Focus Areas (to be chosen by host site)

_____ Pre-K School Readiness

_____ K-12 Literacy

_____ K-12 STEM

_____ After-School and Summer Camp Leadership

*** Capacity Building Note: Capacity building is considered an indirect service that is intended to enable agencies to provide more or better direct services. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support administration or operations of an organization. They must: 1) Support or enhance program delivery, 2) Respond to the organization's goal of increasing, expanding, or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified by the community, and 3) Enable the organization to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the AmeriCorps member's term of service has ended.

Essential Functions in Schools

- Plan and facilitate enrichment activities for at-risk students in focus areas
- Create and edit reusable curriculum for enrichment activities
- Provide tutoring to students behind grade level on testing or who have been absent
- Assist in classroom behavior management and teach non-violent conflict resolution skills to students
- Complete student documentation and data tracking
- Educate youth about community service through service-learning projects

Essential Functions in After-School/Summer Camp Programming

- Assist students with homework/coursework
- Plan and prepare healthy snacks
- Potentially provide transportation to and from programming
- Plan and facilitate enrichment activities for at-risk youth and field trips (activities may include hiking, swimming, running, etc.)

Other Duties

- Communicate with parents regarding a student's absences, behavior, and coursework
- Provide parents with information regarding school expectations, community resources, and tools to help children with homework
- Assist in recruitment, training, and management of community volunteers assisting in enrichment programming
- Be available for disaster relief if needed

Qualifications

- Four-year degree from an accredited institution of higher learning or sufficient related experience
- Satisfactory results of the three step National Service Criminal History Check
- Passion for working with at-risk youth
- Patience in the provision of academic enrichment to at-risk youth
- Display a caring approach to learning and openness to learning new things
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Must be a citizen of the United States or a national or permanent legal resident
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) language skills would be a plus but not required

Community Resource Specialist:

Purpose: Project POWER (Putting Opportunity Within Everyone's Reach) is a State AmeriCorps program operated by Children First/Communities In Schools of Buncombe County to provide increased enrichment, mentoring services, and access to basic needs to vulnerable youth in Western North Carolina. Full-time members will provide 1,700 hours of service over the course of one year (August 7th, 2017-July 30th, 2018) in activities such as providing small group literacy tutoring, classroom assistance, facilitation of after-school programming, STEM curriculum development and implementation, and community outreach to increase food security to families regionally. Members will directly serve students and provide capacity building initiatives in increase services provided to low-income families. Project POWER staff will provide on-going member and host site training through team meetings, webinars, site visits, and conference calls. Full-time Project POWER members receive a \$13,100 living stipend paid over 11.5 installments, health insurance, and an education award of \$5,815 upon successful completion of service.

Focus Areas (to be chosen by host site)

_____ Increasing access to basic need services/healthy life skills

_____ Increasing access to educational programming

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Essential Functions

- Develop and implement effective recruitment and placement of compassionate and caring community volunteers
- Assist in the development of appropriate orientation, training, supervision, and appreciation of community volunteers
- Develop and facilitate community trainings to educate the community to promote increased access to basic need services or awareness of healthy life skills
- Create appropriate educational materials to help families increase access to basic need services and awareness of healthy life skills
- Network with community organizations and schools to create partnerships to reach families in-need
- Participate in community outreach to share resources and reach new audiences
- Assist in the resource allocation of items to support programming
- Create training manuals outlining curriculum developed by member, resource guides, and volunteer management to sustain organizational growth after AmeriCorps term is complete

Other Duties

- Assist in collecting and recording data regarding volunteer participation and service and families served
- Be available for disaster relief if needed

Qualifications

- Four-year degree from an accredited institution of higher learning or sufficient related experience
- Satisfactory results of the three step National Service Criminal History Check
- Passion for working with the socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse families
- Professional customer service skills

- Knowledge or willingness to learn how to use Microsoft Office, volunteer tracking data bases, shared calendars, etc.
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Must be a citizen of the United States or a national or permanent legal resident
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) language skills would be a plus but not required

Prohibited Activities

- AmeriCorps members will not be used in a way that will displace an employee or position or infringe on an employee's promotional opportunities.
- AmeriCorps members may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any:
 - Presently employed workers
 - Employee who recently resigned or was discharged
 - Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall right pursuant to collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures
 - Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick)
 - Employee who is on strike or is being locked out.
- Any person employed by the host site within the preceding six months may not be placed an AmeriCorps member in that host site.
- Members may not be temporarily or permanently reassigned tasks that are not related to the AmeriCorps project.

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - i. A business organized for profit;
 - ii. A labor union;
 - iii. A partisan political organization;
 - iv. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in

this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and

- v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- 9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- 10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- 11. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

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