

LINKS Partner Toolbox

Tools for building success with your LINKS member



LINKS

- **Use a checklist** to make sure you are ready for your member and will be able to hit the ground running when they start. (LINKS Member Readiness Checklist - Page 2.)
- **Prepare your staff** so that they may help to facilitate a great placement for your member. (AmeriCorps Members at your Organization - Page 4.)
- Working together with your LINKS member, **create a workplan** to use as a guide throughout the member's term of service. (Developing a Workplan - Page 6.)
- Encourage your members to **take advantage of trainings** that you provide or that you find and which are provided by the community. LINKS provides all members access to a \$50 training fund.
- Help your member to **leave a tangible legacy** of service for use after s/he is no longer serving with your organization. (Project Sustainability – Page 10.)
- **Utilize effective coaching and supervision techniques** to maximize member success. (Effective Supervision – Page 11.)



Tool #1: LINKS Member Readiness Checklist

Preparing for your members

Members can start serving with your organization as soon as they complete their orientation with LINKS. Between now and then, you'll want to prepare to welcome your member. Here are some things you can do:

- Contact your member and make arrangements for his or her first day. What time should s/he come? Where? Does s/he need to bring anything?
- Prepare your member's work station. Set up the desk, phone, and computer. Create an in-box, set up an e-mail account, post the position description, hang a name plate.
- Announce the AmeriCorps member's arrival in your organization's newsletter or meetings.
- Prepare your colleagues. Please make sure they know a little bit about AmeriCorps, your member and your member's role. It's so important that your colleagues understand what is (and isn't) part of your member's role with your organization. Be sure to highlight and inform staff of any prohibited activities.
- Create a plan for your member's first day and an agenda for the first week or two. Map out what your member's first day will entail. Create a loose plan for the first few weeks that you can go over with the member on his or her first day.

Orientation to the organization

- Introduce the member to key staff and volunteers.
- Inform the member about the history and goals of the organization.
- Familiarize the member with the community served by the organization.
- Explain to the member how his/her position supports the mission and long-term goals of the organization.

Orientation to the project

- Give a general overview of the project, including long-term tasks and goals.
- Provide time for the member and the supervisor to develop clear tasks and goals for at least the first week of the placement.
- Assess the member's training needs. If there are specific skills that the member does not have, discuss a plan for how the member will attain those skills.
- Ask the member if s/he has specific interests or skills related to the placement that s/he

would like to focus on or contribute.

- Provide time for the member to observe the work they will be involved in, if appropriate.

Orientation to the site

- Give the member a tour of the facility, including his/her personal workspace.
- Describe the resources available to the member-office equipment, curriculum etc.
- Explain office procedures and systems.
- Familiarize the member with office expectations around issues such as appropriate dress, hours, and communication.
- Provide the member with a staff or volunteer handbook, if available.
- If possible, give the member a tour of any other sites where they may be working on a regular basis. If a tour is not possible, explain where the sites are located relative to the office.



Tool #2: Educating Your Organization about AmeriCorps & Your New Members

Congratulations! Your organization has been chosen to be a sponsor site for a LINKS AmeriCorps member! You are now part of an exciting network supporting national service and the ethic of getting things done.

AmeriCorps members and the projects they do are in a category all their own. This fact sheet has been developed to help your staff understand what AmeriCorps is and the role your members will play in helping your organization meet critical community needs.

AmeriCorps Members...

ARE:

- Individuals age 17 and up (there is no upper age limit)
- Excited about serving their community
- Coordinating, developing, supervising, or specializing in a specific project for the organization that has a direct impact on the community (e.g. volunteer coordination, running a mentoring program, providing resource assistance to fixed-income adults, teaching life skills to at-risk youth)
- Doing projects or providing services that would otherwise not get done, and which are unique from other staff duties
- Gaining valuable professional skills and experience
- Pursuing leadership and other development opportunities on top of their daily tasks
- Self-starters who take on major projects with very little compensation

ARE NOT:

- Paid staff, temp workers, administrative help, or substitutes
- Allowed to perform any duties that are or have been assigned to a paid staff person as part of the staff person's essential responsibilities
- Looking to take jobs from paid staff
- Paid like normal staff (they may receive small monthly living stipend)

☺ **To learn more about your AmeriCorps members, talk to them!**

Facts About AmeriCorps and LINKS

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is National Service movement of over a million current and alumni members. AmeriCorps members devote a short period of their lives to "getting things done," strengthening communities, developing their skills, and expanding their opportunities. Through service at a nonprofit organization, government agency or school, members address pressing educational, environmental, public safety, and other human needs.

LINKS

LINKS is a multi-state (Washington, Oregon, Alaska) individual placement model AmeriCorps program. LINKS is administered by and housed at ESD 112 in Vancouver, Washington.

This year, the LINKS program will place approximately 200 part-time AmeriCorps members at nonprofits, government agencies and schools throughout our service area. These partner agencies have developed direct-service AmeriCorps positions for our members. LINKS members may be current college students, they may be employed "on the side," or they may be looking to start or change careers.

LINKS Member Service

Through direct or "hands on" service, LINKS members address issues in four target areas: education, public safety, environment, and health and human needs. LINKS members are recruiting volunteers, organizing garden programs, leading after-school activities that keep kids off the street, teaching life skills to at-risk youth and more.

LINKS Member Benefits

In return for their service with your organization, members receive an education award of \$1,000 to \$4,725 depending on the number of hours they serve. Education awards can be used for tuition at qualified colleges or to repay student loans. A living allowance, medical insurance, and child-care (if qualified) are available only for 1700 hour terms and full-time (6 month) 900 hour members. Some partners choose to provide a small stipend. All members gain skills, take on new responsibilities, make new contacts, make a difference in their community and feel the satisfaction of "getting things done."



Tool #3: Developing a Workplan with your LINKS Member

Working together, the member and site supervisor should develop a workplan that outlines the major goals and tasks for the service term. Workplans are a helpful tool for managing one's time and energy.

What is a workplan?

- A detailed timeline of major project related tasks
- It considers member skills and goals
- A living document that should be revised as needed

Why create a workplan?

- Provides member and site supervisor with formal planning process and organizational tool
- Helps sites and member maximize the service term
- Gives member understanding of how the project supports long-term goals of organization
- Encourages member independence and accountability
- Assists member in managing time and site responsibilities
- Supports early planning for project sustainability
- Assists members and sponsor in summarizing project goals and accomplishments

What does the workplan include?

- Major goals, events, and deadlines (not specific duties)
- Tasks organized by major project categories
- Information organized chronologically by month
- Useful format for both member and site
- Project sustainability plans

What is the role of the site?

- Work closely with the member to develop workplan
- Review the position description with the member and identify and explain major responsibilities
- Explain the steps needed to achieve the goals and major responsibilities
- Provide long-term organizational perspective
- Ensure that timeline and goals are reasonable
- Use workplan as a tool in supervisory meetings throughout term
- Sustainability – helps member provide transitions to future project goals after member's term of service ends

Workplan Sample

Placement Site: _____ Member name: _____

Member signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

1. Major Responsibilities (from the member's position description):
 - Recruit community volunteers to participate in afterschool and family literacy program
 - Train, support and track community volunteers
 - Tutor students in reading
 - Plan, coordinate and lead afterschool literacy activities
2. Site Specific Skills Trainings the member will need to be successful:
 - Volunteer Recruitment and Management (9/27/2008)
 - Literacy Tutoring Strategies (10/14/2008)
3. AmeriCorps member's personal and professional goal for the term (what does the member want to get out of this experience?):
 - Gain professional experience working in a school to help me determine if I want to pursue a Masters degree in teaching
 - Become comfortable giving presentations and facilitating meetings and trainings
 - Become proficient in developing enrichment and curriculum activities
4. How will the member build sustainability for the project so that it continues after the member's term of service is complete?
 - Develop a school day volunteer program including several materials/documents and a volunteer training template that can continue to be used after the end of the term of service
 - Recruit three or more volunteers to serve as Volunteer Program Coordinators in the next school year
5. Day of the week and time of weekly one-on-one supervision meeting: Mondays, 11-11:45 am

Monthly Workplan

First session

Major Duty #1: Volunteer program coordination

- Review organization's past volunteer recruitment efforts
- Research models at similar organizations
- Generate outreach plan
- Collaborate with staff to develop volunteer position descriptions
- Complete Volunteer Recruitment and Management Training

Major Duty #2: Tutoring

- Sit in on tutoring sessions with the Title 1 Teacher

- Meet with Title 1 Teacher to determine which students need tutoring
- With the Title 1 Teacher lead first group and individual tutoring sessions

Major Duty #3: Afterschool activities

- Observe afterschool programming at other elementary schools in the district
- Recruit students to participate in afterschool programming
- Collect permission slips for student participation
- Plan and lead 3 days of activities in the last week of September

Second session

Major Duty #1: Volunteer Program

- Develop volunteer handbook based on handbook for during the school day volunteers
- Conduct at least 5 volunteer outreach sessions
- Develop internship material for internship coordinator at local college
- Recruit at least 5 volunteers
- Train volunteers to serve as afterschool and family literacy activities

Major Duty #2: Tutoring

- Schedule individual and group tutoring sessions with all identified students so each student is receiving at least one hour of one-on-one tutoring per week and one hour of group tutoring per month.
- Begin tutoring students
- Complete Literacy Tutoring Strategies training

Major Duty #3: Afterschool Activities

- Develop themed curriculum for a two-three week period
- Lead this curriculum in afterschool programming three days per week throughout the month

LINKS Workplan (Template)

Placement Site: _____ Member name: _____

Member signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

1. Major duties for the project:

- Duty # 1

- Duty # 2

- Duty # 3

2. Major Responsibilities (from the member's position description):

3. Site Specific Skills Trainings the member will need to be successful:

4. AmeriCorps member's personal and professional goal for the term (what does the member want to get out of this experience?)

5. What will the member do to build sustainability for the project so that it continues after his or her service term?

6. Day of the week and time of weekly one-on-one supervision meeting: _____



Tool #4: Project Sustainability

LINKS members can develop documents or systems that will help to sustain their projects into the future.

Former placements provide examples of sustainability. An environmental education non-profit used the AmeriCorps member's service to demonstrate the feasibility of a project for which they could then secure funding. The member serving at a school created an art history class whose success demonstrated the need for establishing the class on a permanent basis. Members at school sites have developed volunteer programs that involve local community members in providing service to the school. Members have also piloted Volunteer coordinator positions that agencies have then turned into permanent staff positions. The following are examples of activities that support sustainability.

Member activities that support sustainability:

- On going documentation (files, binders, legacy manual, calendars, scrapbooks etc)
- Databases
- Training staff to continue project elements
- Recruiting volunteers to continue project elements
- Present to organization, staff, and board
- Compile annual report summarizing accomplishments and next steps

Sponsor activities that support sustainability:

- Ensure that the project supports long-term goals of organization
- Share long term plans with member
- Share information about member project with the rest of the organization
- Plan for sustainability through out the service term
- Allow member time at end of service term for closure and transition
- Identify staff/volunteers to continue project elements
- Develop resources to ensure the continuation of the project
- Apply for another LINKS AmeriCorps member to take project to the next level

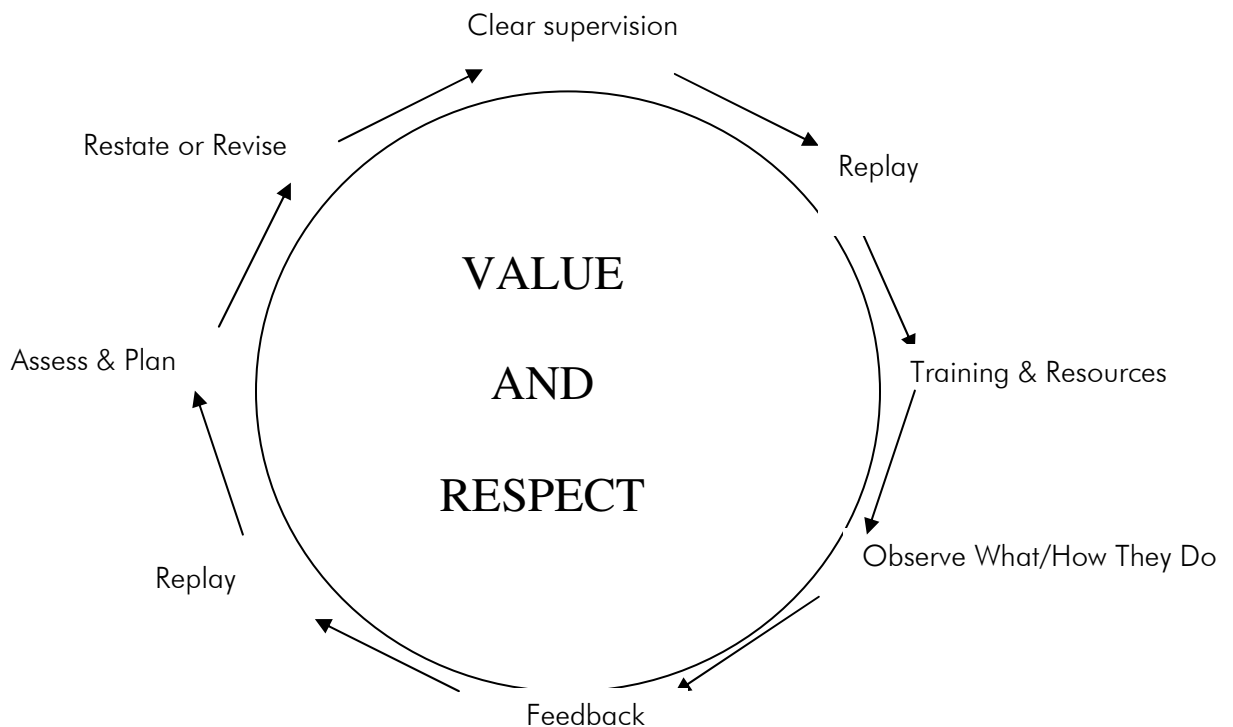


Tool #5: Effective Supervision

Supervision is more effective when:

1. Expectations are clearly stated and understood;
2. The employee's performance is observed;
3. Feedback regarding the employee's performance is provided in a timely fashion and discussed;
4. Teaching and learning are part of the supervisory process; and
5. The relationship is marked by caring respect.

The Supervisory Loop, Maximizing Employee Success:



Assessing Member Needs:

Symptom:

Doesn't know or doesn't understand..... Clarify Expectations
 Doesn't know or doesn't understand..... Training
 Fear/Anxiety..... Support/Smaller Steps/Mentoring
 Personal Life Issues..... Referral to Help/Suspension
 Values Conflict..... Clarify the Choice
 Attitude..... Clear Bottom Line