



# ServeOhio 2016-17 AmeriCorps Communication Guide

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## **Introduction**

Public and media relations matter because a positive relationship with your community and media can help garner and build support for your program. It matters because you can tell your meaningful story better than anybody else. Taking the time to communicate helps attract resources for your program including volunteers, sponsors, and funders.

Public relations simply means developing and managing a deliberate and strategic approach to publicizing your message. Maintaining relationships with media outlets can help to publicize your program, acknowledge your funders, and strengthen your voice to those you serve. Additionally, positive media relations strengthen your organization's reputation as a trusted and credible resource in your community.

Sub-grantees are responsible for assuring that the proper ServeOhio acknowledgement occurs. This is where ServeOhio asks for consistency in core messaging so that our strong partnership continues. ServeOhio funds and administers state AmeriCorps programs, where terms and conditions require proper communication to illustrate our important relationship. This guide will serve as your resource for media relations, event planning, and signage as outlined in provision 1.3 and 1.3.1 of the [Ohio AmeriCorps Supplementary Terms and Conditions](#). If you have specific questions that are not addressed in this guide, please contact the [Outreach & Education Officer](#) at ServeOhio.

## **About ServeOhio**

ServeOhio, Ohio's commission on service and volunteerism, helps solve Ohio's critical economic challenges by administering AmeriCorps funding that targets areas of education, economic opportunity, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, disaster services, veteran's and military families, and capacity building.

*Mission: Strengthening Ohio  
Communities through AmeriCorps  
and Volunteer Engagement.*

The Ohio Legislature established ServeOhio in 1994, under the original name of The Governor's Community Service Commission. ServeOhio operates under authority pursuant to Section 121.40 of the Ohio Revised Code. ServeOhio is purposed specifically to administer grants in Ohio under the federal National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Today, the largest of these grants is the AmeriCorps program, where Ohio currently has 25 partner organizations and 800 AmeriCorps members serving throughout the state. The broad mission remains the same – to strengthen Ohio communities through AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement.

The Ohio General Assembly and the Corporation for National and Community Service fund ServeOhio. ServeOhio leverages federal, state, and private dollars to operate and fund AmeriCorps State programs.

In addition to administering AmeriCorps programs, ServeOhio partners with volunteer administrators, mobilizers, and non-profits to promote volunteerism throughout Ohio. In 2014, 2.51 million Ohioans volunteered, contributing 267.1 million hours of service valued at \$6.2 billion ([volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://volunteeringinamerica.gov)).

## ServeOhio AmeriCorps Portfolio

The 2016-17 AmeriCorps Portfolio includes 25 programs which support 800 members. For a copy of the 2016-17 program directory, visit [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org).

## Staff

ServeOhio staff provides service-leadership, AmeriCorps programmatic assistance, communication support, and professional development. As of August 2016, there are 7 full-time [staff members](#) at ServeOhio.

## Commissioners

Commissioners play an important role in developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to encourage and expand community service programs throughout the state. Currently, there are 23 Commissioners; Johnmark Oudersluys is Chair of the Commission as of January, 2016. Visit [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org) for a complete list of ServeOhio commissioners.

## Ohio AmeriCorps Supplementary Terms & Conditions: Program Year 2016-17

ServeOhio includes media guidance in the Ohio AmeriCorps Supplementary Terms & Conditions to highlight the AmeriCorps commitment to local, state and national partnerships:

- 1.3 Sub-grantee must credit ServeOhio for its support and use the name “ServeOhio, Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism,” and/or current logo on communications, publications, marketing and media materials as outlined in the ServeOhio Communication Guidelines. Detailed instructions and training are found on the ServeOhio website.
  - 1.3.1 Acknowledgement of Support: Publications created by members or grant funded staff must be consistent with the purposes of the grant and must include the AmeriCorps logo and ServeOhio logo. The Sub-grantee is responsible for assuring that CNCS and ServeOhio acknowledgment appears in any external report or publication of material based upon work supported by this grant. Acknowledgement also must meet federal requirements under CNCS AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions III.B.

## Acknowledging ServeOhio

Sub-grantees must acknowledge “ServeOhio, Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism” in all AmeriCorps communication, marketing and media materials, including, but not limited to, publications, press releases, newsletters, emails, websites, and brochures. Use “ServeOhio” in all mentions after the official title. Continue to use “CNCS” when referencing the Corporation for National and Community Service.

**All sub-grantee websites must post both the AmeriCorps AND ServeOhio logos.**

## Compliance

Sub-grantees are responsible for assuring that AmeriCorps publications acknowledge ServeOhio. During site visits with the ServeOhio AmeriCorps Compliance Officer, sub-grantees must show examples of proper ServeOhio logo use, printed acknowledgement and marketing materials. Sub-grantees shall fully demonstrate to the AmeriCorps Compliance Officer that their organization is part of a statewide service effort by using the ServeOhio logo and title, where applicable.

Should an inaccuracy occur, such as a reporter’s error or incorrect use of the ServeOhio name, the ServeOhio Compliance Officer will also take into consideration the program’s swift corrective action.

## Host Sites

Program Directors are responsible for ensuring that host site staff are trained with ServeOhio terms and conditions 1.3 and 1.3.1, media communication requirements and public relations associated with the organization’s AmeriCorps program. Host sites must show examples of proper ServeOhio logo use, printed acknowledgement and marketing materials.

## Hosting a Public Event

ServeOhio strongly encourages sub-grantees to identify and invite ServeOhio Commissioners and staff, local elected officials, local media, business partners and community partners to ensure an active event that shows the strength of the statewide partnership. Sub-grantees should designate 1 or 2 spokespersons at each event that are familiar with core messaging, communication, and the elevator speech.

These items should be included at or take place at public events:

- AmeriCorps Logos, Signage, and Clothing (*required*)
- Introduction of Stakeholders
- Testimonials
- Presentation
- Information Packet with Statistics
- Photo Opportunities
- Action and Visuals
- “AmeriCorps Member for a Day”
- Sponsor logos on printed materials.

Tip: Keep a list of “validators” who can speak easily and enthusiastically about your program! Designate them as a potential spokesperson and call them for a quick quote.

We strongly encourage you to include these items on your PR checklist:

- ✓ Resources and Logos
- ✓ Contact Lists
  - ✓ ServeOhio Commissioners and Staff
  - ✓ County Contacts
  - ✓ Business Contacts

- ✓ Legislators
- ✓ Board of Education
- ✓ Local Media and Notable Celebrities
- ✓ Information Packets
- ✓ Spokespeople – 1 or 2 spokespeople to communicate message

## Social Media

Social media is a great way to generate supporters and share information about your program. ServeOhio is active on Twitter and Facebook with the handle @ServeOhio. **All programs are strongly encouraged to follow/like ServeOhio’s social media pages to stay up to date on the latest national service and volunteerism updates.** When sharing information about your program on social media, please mention ServeOhio in your posts.

Additionally, we encourage you to send us pictures, great stories, and upcoming events that we can feature on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Please send this information on a regular basis to the Outreach & Education Officer.

## Samples

Use these samples as templates or create your own compliant messaging.

### Sample “Accomplishment” Core Messages

#### Commemorating X Years of Service to the X Community

##### COMMUNITY

- (Program) has provided (list services)
- (Program) members have contributed (x) hours over (x) years
- More than (x) people have been served by (program) over the past (x) years

##### STATE

- In PY 2016-17, over 800 Ohio AmeriCorps members will provide 1.2 million hours of service throughout the state.
- In PY 2014-15, Ohio AmeriCorps members mobilized 9,270 volunteers who gave 44,775 hours of service.
- Ohio AmeriCorps members serve at over 440 schools, nonprofits, government, faith-based, and community organizations across the state.
- Since 1994, more than 30,000 Ohio residents have served more than 47 million hours and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$93.2 million.

##### NATIONAL

- AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 women and men in service each year.
- Members are placed in areas of education, healthy futures, economic opportunity, veterans, environmental stewardship and disaster services in 15,000 nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country.
- Mobilizes 3.4 million volunteers annually
- Leverages \$480 million in outside funding and donations each year

## Sample Press Release

DATE

CONTACT: Name  
PHONE  
EMAIL ADDRESS

**[LOCAL PROGRAM] Celebrates Community Service with [TYPE OF EVENT] and Highlights Involvement with AmeriCorps**  
*[HIGHEST RANKING SPEAKER/PARTICIPANT] participates in [ENTER EVENT] with community members*

OR

**Local community members join forces with [LOCAL PROGRAM] to [ACCOMPLISH WHAT IN THE CITY]**

*More than XX volunteers and AmeriCorps members serve at the event*

**[CITY, STATE]**—To [DESCRIBE REASON FOR HOLDING EVENT], more than [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] from [PROGRAM NAME], a program funded *[or: in partnership with]* by ServeOhio, Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism, have come together today to [DESCRIBE SERVICE EVENT/ACTIVITY].

[HIGHEST RANKING SPEAKER/PARTICIPANT] joined the [EVENT/SERVICE ACTIVITY] on [DATE] to [DESCRIBE INVOLVEMENT]. Other participants included [NAME ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS].

“For [ENTER YEARS IN EXISTENCE] years, [PROGRAM NAME] has helped [LOCAL COMMUNITY] to [DESCRIBE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHT ACCOMPLISHMENTS],” said [HIGHEST RANKING SPEAKER/PARTICIPANT]. “Thanks are due to ServeOhio, which administers the AmeriCorps grant that supports [LOCAL PROGRAM].”

Across Ohio, members in AmeriCorps programs similar to [PROGRAM NAME] work hard to help solve Ohio’s critical economic challenges by improving the lives of thousands of our most vulnerable citizens. Every day, they help children learn to read, rebuild communities struck by environmental tragedies, transform failing schools and revitalize communities. They do this through direct service and by mobilizing thousands of additional volunteers. ServeOhio, and The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides AmeriCorps and administers funding to Ohio.

“[LOCAL PROGRAM] AmeriCorps members serve our community with tremendous dedication and enthusiasm,” said [PROGRAM DIRECTOR]. “Without their assistance, we would not be able to provide the services vital to the health and well-being of our community.”

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[LOCAL PROGRAM BOILERPLATE]

ServeOhio is Ohio’s Governor-appointed Commission on Service and Volunteerism. Their mission is to strengthen Ohio communities through AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement by supporting and funding programs and initiatives that engage thousands of Ohioans of all ages. Interested participants may learn more about ServeOhio at [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org) or visit them on Facebook and Twitter.

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps and AmeriCorps. For more information, visit [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov).