



SERVE OHIO
Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism

AmeriCorps Retention Affinity Diagram Results

Ohio AmeriCorps Program Staff participated in the Retention Affinity Diagram exercise at the October 30, 2012 Program Director meeting. Below are the Member retention ideas and best practices directly from Program Directors and Staff regarding member support and communication, member development and member recruitment.

1. AmeriCorps Member Recruitment: ways to enhance recruitment practices

Ideas

- Continue to hone training/orientation to be as clear as possible about expectations for their time & performance
- Information sessions
- Establish clear expectations before members start
- Emphasize completion of term throughout all phases of recruitment especially during the interview process
- Thoroughly discuss during the interview the living stipend, ask candidates to share how they've considered the impact of the stipend and how they'll live on it
- Positive PR on the program
- Recruit people that are committed to service
- Ask potential members for a statement on their commitment to a year of service before they are selected

Best Practices

- Year around recruitment cycle with quarterly goals for confirmed members, monthly information sessions/open houses to ensure members understand expectations & service
- Start recruitment in February for August start, phone interview, in person interview, potential service site interview, and try to recruit members from non-AmeriCorps volunteers
- Recruit early & often
- During the interview ask the potential member if there are any reasons they can't commit to a year
- Be very clear in the member service agreement how long the commitment is
- Be very specific with position descriptions and service requirements
- Create a common presentation for information sessions to ensure consistency & important information, that host sites can also utilize
- Use "Ohio Means" to post as an internship, use community college electronic job boards
- Be upfront about challenges & opportunities
- Ask the potential member to share the meaning of service vs. job

- Phone discussions with potential members discussing the details of service, importance of full commitment and timeframe & encourage the person to ask questions
- Clearly describe program tasks during recruitment process
- Recommend people you know to other programs
- Hold group interviews & second interviews
- Ask potential members to write a page on what being in the program means to them
- Discuss with potential members AmeriCorps in terms of local, state and national impact-big picture
- Clearly explain limited member benefits

2. Member Support/Communication: supporting and communicating with AmeriCorps members

Ideas

- Evaluate member satisfaction
- Bi-weekly one on one's between managers and members
- Checking in often and asking questions
- Reward members often
- Assist with any issues relating to retention
- During recruitment, stress the importance of commitment
- Act as a mediator/counselor/problem solver
- On site visits often, performance reviews

Best Practices

- Idealist Journey Reflection-Bi-weekly groups which allow members to reflect on their service, progress & share best practices
- Bi-weekly check-in with each member
- Open door of communication with program staff
- Provide email & text message blast praising & encouraging
- Moving from monthly member meeting to bi-weekly member meetings to foster better relationships with other members due to them being off site.
- Weekly update email-members are required every Monday morning to submit and program staff gives immediate feedback and problem solving suggestions
- Share data with members showing impact and improvement
- Have monthly webinars to communicate important items, successes, & provide trainings
- Bi-weekly visits to sites
- Monthly conference calls with members
- Newsletter
- Meet individually with members without the site supervisor
- Monthly technical assistance at sites, weekly if necessary
- Respond to emails from members quickly-24 hrs max
- Use a Groupsite that enables members & staff to share emails, files, photos & discussion
- Facebook page so members can talk to each other
- Go to service sites during direct service
- Team building activities integrated throughout the year

3. Member Development: increasing the development of members during and after AmeriCorps service

Ideas

- Provide service opportunities that have meaning and value
- Provide good professional development
- Justice Talking/Monthly member development meetings
- Continuous member development
- Member development that meets the needs of the members
- Integrate members fully into the organization
- Make sure members see the impact of their service, have positive relationships in the Corps, & have time to grow & have fun

Best Practices

- Bi-monthly trainings-Beginning of the year plan for service trainings & end of the year plan for future trainings
- Integrate member requested trainings
- Make sure training relates back to developing member capacity for after service
- Allow members to attend Tyger time-weekly professional development sessions for teachers
- Have members complete personal goals & objectives at the start of the term & explore them together one on one-how can you help them achieve, through training, experience, networking
- Connect to other trainings of organizations & partnering organizations
- Weekly professional development trainings as a Corps at the main office
- Roles & Goals list is published at training and we cover it & review it often for first several months of their service
- Customized & branded "Life After AmeriCorps" training
- Providing opportunities for members to recommit to service throughout the year-large group service projects, justice talking, & member networking sessions
- Monthly Justice Talking sessions for all members in small groups
- Ongoing trainings related to what the members do each day so the member feels confident in providing service
- Learn what the member interests are and create opportunities/trainings that fit member goals for life after AmeriCorps
- Provide career development & job search skills for all members
- Partner new members with retuning/more experienced members
- Invite guest speakers on a wide variety of topics
- Conduct surveys to solicit what leadership development & social issues topics the members want, to provide workshops & events