



**AMERICA'S**  
**SERVICE**  
**COMMISSIONS**

# **Recruiting During Social Distancing**

## **Program Officer Learning Community**

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06.09.20



## Agenda

- Welcome
- Updates from ASC
- Presentation from Peer
  - Brent Kossick, South Carolina Service Commission & Aligned Impact Consulting
- Q & A



## Updates from ASC

- Enrollment is open now through Friday, August 21 for the 2020-2021 AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program (MAP).
- ASC will host an informational webinar on Thursday, June 18 at 2:00 p.m. ET.
  - Register: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/7410222793996568833>.
  - Complete info on the MAP and enrollment is available at <https://www.statecommissions.org/ameri-corps-member-assistance-program>.
- Regional Training Events are postponed until 2021



## Updates from ASC

- Basecamp:
  - Message Board
  - Resources
  - PO Learning Community Calls
    - <https://3.basecamp.com/3624101/buckets/2212053/vaults/1743455334>
- Next PO Learning Community Call:
  - Virtual Member Orientation and Training
  - Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 Eastern

# Introductions





# *New* Challenges

- ❖ The U.S. unemployment rate is at
  - ~~3.7%, which represents an 18-year low~~
  - 14.7%, which represents the highest rate since the Great Depression
- ❖ Since FY15 Congress has increased the AmeriCorps S/N budget by \$89,580,000
  - Will we also see supplemental funds?
- ❖ Reduced opportunity for in-person recruitment





# Optimizing Efficiencies



# Educating Applicants



<https://biteable.com/watch/amicorps-applicant-program-overview-2354623>



# Scheduling



[www.Calendly.com](http://www.Calendly.com)

Calendly can help you schedule meetings without the back-and-forth emails. The service has the ability to link to most popular online calendar systems and allows applicants to self-schedule when their interview will occur based on the availability that you have indicated. Meeting details will automatically populate on your calendar and will also send a notification to the applicant.



# Strategic Writing Samples

Many AmeriCorps programs value the process of incorporating a writing sample into their application process. Instead of asking applicants to respond to a generic questions, consider asking candidates to respond to several short-answer questions that also seek to identify potential red flags based on Member retention challenges.

## **Members leaving early do to financial challenges:**

- ❖ Individuals who serve with [Program Name] do not receive an hourly pay or a salary during their term of service with the program. Instead, first-time AmeriCorps Members will receive a \$1,263 monthly living allowance in exchange for their commitment to consistently provide 40 or more hours of service to the program per week. Please briefly describe why you believe that the \$1,263 monthly living allowance will adequately allow you to meet your needs during your term of service.

## **Leaving for alternative employment options:**

- ❖ Please describe why you are choosing to pursue a term of service instead of regular employment at this point in your life/career, and what specifically attracted you to the opportunity with [Program Name]?

## **Members struggling to cope with program challenging situations or major life changes:**

- ❖ Although your AmeriCorps term of service with [Program Name] will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life, it might also be one of the most challenging experiences. What do you believe will be some of the greatest challenges that you will face while serving with [Program Name]? What strategies will you use to help you adjust to these challenges?



# Scoring Matrix

- ❖ The Member selection process should not take more than three weeks (from application-to-decision)
- ❖ Useful for conducting panel interviews

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RATING SCALE

(1) <b>Unacceptable</b> – Question not fully answered, or the answer given highlighted concerns for the interviewer	(3) <b>Average</b> – General understanding / acceptable answer / definite ability to train
(2) <b>Below Average</b> – Possibly trainable	(4) <b>Above Average</b> – demonstrated experience or a high-level of understanding

## DEDICATION

1. *Tell us about a situation that you had to break a commitment, and describe why that commitment couldn't be met.*

(1) (2) (3) (4)

2. *What types of non-monetary rewards are most meaningful to you?*

(1) (2) (3) (4)

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE / MATURITY

3. *How would you handle a coworker or classmate who consistently does not pull his or her weight on group assignments?*

(1) (2) (3) (4)

4. *What are one or two things that make you angry or frustrated at work, or when working with a group of individuals? What do you do when you get angry or frustrated at work?*

(1) (2) (3) (4)

## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

5. *What is your definition of diversity and how or why do you think diversity is important?*



# Identifying Non-Negotiables

- ❖ Useful for maximizing your time on the right candidates

## AMERICORPS MEMBER INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

### (Behavioral Interviewing Tactics / Identifying “Red Flags”)

#### CONFIRM

Candidate Name:

Position of Interest:

Other positions of interest:

Location(s) of Interest:

Start Date:

Drivers License: Y / N

**DISCUSS AMERICORPS BASICS** (Living allowance, hour requirement, hours per week, etc.)

#### COACHABLE / ACCOUNTABLE

Tell me about a time that you received feedback from a supervisor, coach, or teacher about how to improve your performance. What changes did you make based upon the feedback?

- *Strong: Demonstrates willingness to learn, receptive of constructive criticism, and adjusts actions.*
- *Moderate: Adjusts actions, but demonstrates a level of contempt.*
- *Possible Red flags: Did not adequately adjust behavior - Points out how former supervisor was wrong.*

#### PROBLEM SOLVING / INITIATIVE / LEADERSHIP

Tell me about a time when you were a member of a team that had to solve a problem. What approach did the team take, and how was it resolved?

-OR-

Describe a recent problem that you handled and the specific steps you took after you identified the cause. What was the outcome?

- *Strong: Demonstrates ability to identify problems and takes a leadership role in addressing the concern.*



# Optimizing Customer Service



# Eliminating Barriers



- ❖ It is suggested that you create an internal application process to reduce the number of barriers that a candidate may experience when applying to your program
- ❖ Google Forms or a stand-alone email address are free/easy options



# Eliminating Barriers

## [Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa](https://www.conservationcorps.org/)

<https://www.conservationcorps.org/> ▼

The **Conservation Corps** provides meaningful work for young people in conserving energy, managing natural resources, responding to disasters and leading ...

### Employment

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa is a proud employer of ...

### AmeriCorps Positions

AmeriCorps is a national service program that addresses ...

### Corps Staff

Administrative Staff ... Youth and Individual Placement Program ...

### Summer Youth Corps

Summer Youth Corps is a summer job that connects teenagers to ...

### Blog

Blog.

### Apply

Positions currently open:  
January/February-December positions ...

[More results from conservationcorps.org »](#)

conservation corps MINNESOTA & IOWA

- About us +
- Join the Corps -
- AmeriCorps Positions (ages 18-25)
- Youth Positions (ages 15-18)
- Hire a Crew +
- Newsroom +
- Support the Corps +
- Alumni & Friends +
- Adopt-A-River +
- Login Access +

read our blog

**give now** **find jobs**

**events**

**Interested in joining the Corps?**  
Sign up below and we'll send you more info!

Members participate in super cool natural resource projects, make amazing career connections, and learn valuable, hands-on skills!

Email Address

**AmeriCorps Positions (ages 18-25):**

- Jan/Feb-Dec positions
- Field Crew Members
- Field Crew Leaders
- Youth Outdoors Member

**Corps Thank You Celebration:**  
Wednesday, March 20, 6-9 PM, Summit Brewing, St. Paul.

- Newsroom +
- Support the Corps +
- Alumni & Friends +
- Adopt-A-River +
- Login Access +

Search

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**GIVE NOW** **JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST**

**MEETS STANDARDS** **AMERICORPS**

Proud Member of **The Corps Network** **CLEAN WATER LAND & AIR**

- The **Operations Coordinator** will handle the distribution, collection and maintenance of all tools and equipment used throughout the program as well as all vehicle logistics, paperwork and upkeep.
- The **Education Activities Coordinator** will handle the distribution, collection and teaching of educational materials as well as coordinating logistics for weekend and in-camp activities.
- The **Kitchen Coordinator/Cook** will manage and care for the kitchen and dining hall facility – following and enforcing all ServSafe and kitchen policies; will handle food planning, purchasing, and preparation – working with swamper, temporary cooks, and volunteers as needed to provide nutritious food for members of all different dietary needs or restrictions; and will coordinate and implement a banquet meal at end of both summer sessions.

For more information, view the [Summer Youth Corps Assistant Director](#) position description.

**To apply:** Submit resume and cover letter to [jonathan@conservationcorps.org](mailto:jonathan@conservationcorps.org)

**Priority Deadline:** February 1, 2018

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa is a proud employer of National Service. AmeriCorps & Peace Corps alumni are encouraged to apply for staff openings!

If you are between the ages of 18 and 25, check out [AmeriCorps positions](#) with the Corps!  
If you are between the ages of 15 and 18, check out [youth opportunities](#) with the Corps!

This program is available to all, without regard to disability, race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or political affiliation. Reasonable accommodations provided upon request.



# Interviewing

- ❖ **Remember that the applicant is also interviewing your organization**
  - Start with small talk or an ice-breaker
  - Be professional and respectful of their time
  - Smile
  - Discuss the organization and your department with enthusiasm
  - Be willing to share your AmeriCorps personal brand/story
  - Be prepared to discuss next steps
  - Be prepared to answer common applicant questions
  - What do you like most about working for [organization name]?
  - What is the most challenging part of the position?
  - What is a typical day like?
  - What is the office/field culture like?
  - What do AmeriCorps members typically move on to do after serving with the program?



# Candidate Engagement

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### [Service Year Alliances Resource Hub](#)

- Virtual Companion
- Benefits of a Service Year
- Surviving Your Service Year Resources:
  - Budgeting, Relocation
  - Housing, Commuting
  - Eating on a Stipend
  - Student Loan Support

The screenshot displays the Service Year Alliances Resource Hub website. The navigation bar includes 'Home', 'All Resources', and 'ServiceYear.org'. Below the navigation bar, there are search filters for 'I am a...' and 'I am looking for...', along with a 'Tags' dropdown. The main content area shows '91 Results' and is sorted by 'Date published'. A grid of resource cards is displayed, each with a title, a thumbnail image, and a file type indicator (MP4 or PDF). The cards include:

- How to Leverage The Virtual Companion Webinar (MP4)
- How Can Service Year Alliances Help You Webinar (MP4)
- The Virtual Companion: A Free Offering to Support Corps Members (PDF)
- Transition After Your Service Year Series (PDF)
- Networking and Interviewing Post-Service (PDF)
- Starting A New Job Post-Service (PDF)
- Service Year Sign Up Guide (PDF)
- Service Years as a Strategy to Expand Access to Afterschool Programs Webinar (MP4)
- Service Years as a Strategy to Expand Access to Afterschool Programs (PDF)
- New Research Pathways After Service - Outcomes of Service Year Alumni Webinar (MP4)
- Funding Resources for Education Service Year Programs (PDF)
- Service Year Thrive Series (PDF)



# Optimizing Online Recruitment



# Attractive Position Postings

## Title

- ❖ Your posting title needs to stand out from other titles
- ❖ Make it compelling, fun and informative
  - “Unlock the World – Teach a Child to Read with AmeriCorps” vs “AmeriCorps Member Tutoring Specialist”
- ❖ Consider using terms like “Fellowship”
- ❖ If the “job board” that you are posting to filters search results alphabetically, start your posting with an “A” to ensure that it will generate towards the top of search results

## Position Posting Length

- ❖ According to LinkedIn, shorter postings may be more effective in the current recruitment market (300 words or less)
- ❖ ONGIG found that apply rates go down for postings that have more than 700 words
- ❖ The best rule of thumb would likely be to keep your position postings between 300 and 700 words, with shorter postings being geared toward millennials

## Sentence Length

- ❖ Shorter sentences lead to a higher comprehension rate
- ❖ Strive to utilize sentences that are eight words or fewer to up your program’s chances of clearly communicating the service experience
- ❖ Removing adverbs can help reduce the length of sentences, while still maintaining the meaning of the sentence
  - Ex. Potentially, Primarily, Closely, Preferable, Creatively, etc.. - “You could potentially develop lesson plans.”



# Attractive Position Posting

## Visual Appeal

According to ONGIG, candidates often reject position postings whose strings of text are too long

- ❖ Keep paragraphs to three sentences or less
- ❖ Use bullet points
- ❖ Have clean section headings (About You, About Us, etc.).
- ❖ A picture is worth a thousand words

## Style

- ❖ Make your posting more inviting to candidates by writing in a conversational and positive way
- ❖ Writing in the first or second person (We/Our or You/Your)
- ❖ Ask questions (“How would you like to help your community while also developing marketable job skills?”)



# Attractive Position Posting

## Position-Specific Postings

- ❖ It is strongly suggested that your program advertise each position separately
- ❖ Typically, AmeriCorps Member postings that are more specific will receive a greater number of high-quality applications (i.e. Volunteer Coordinator vs AmeriCorps Positions Available)
- ❖ Position-specific postings will also help clearly communicate the opportunity and keep the length of your postings manageable

## Update Often

- ❖ This will help you ensure that your posting appears towards the top of search results
- ❖ Be cautious about updating AmeriCorps Portal postings too often



# Engaging Your Target Audience

## Developing a Recruitment Motto/Slogan

Think about developing a recruitment motto to be used consistently throughout your advertising that is easy to remember and has the type of impact that will get people talking. Then use the recruitment motto on everything! From social media cover photos, to video, email signatures, billboards, flyers, program T-shirts, hashtags, etc.

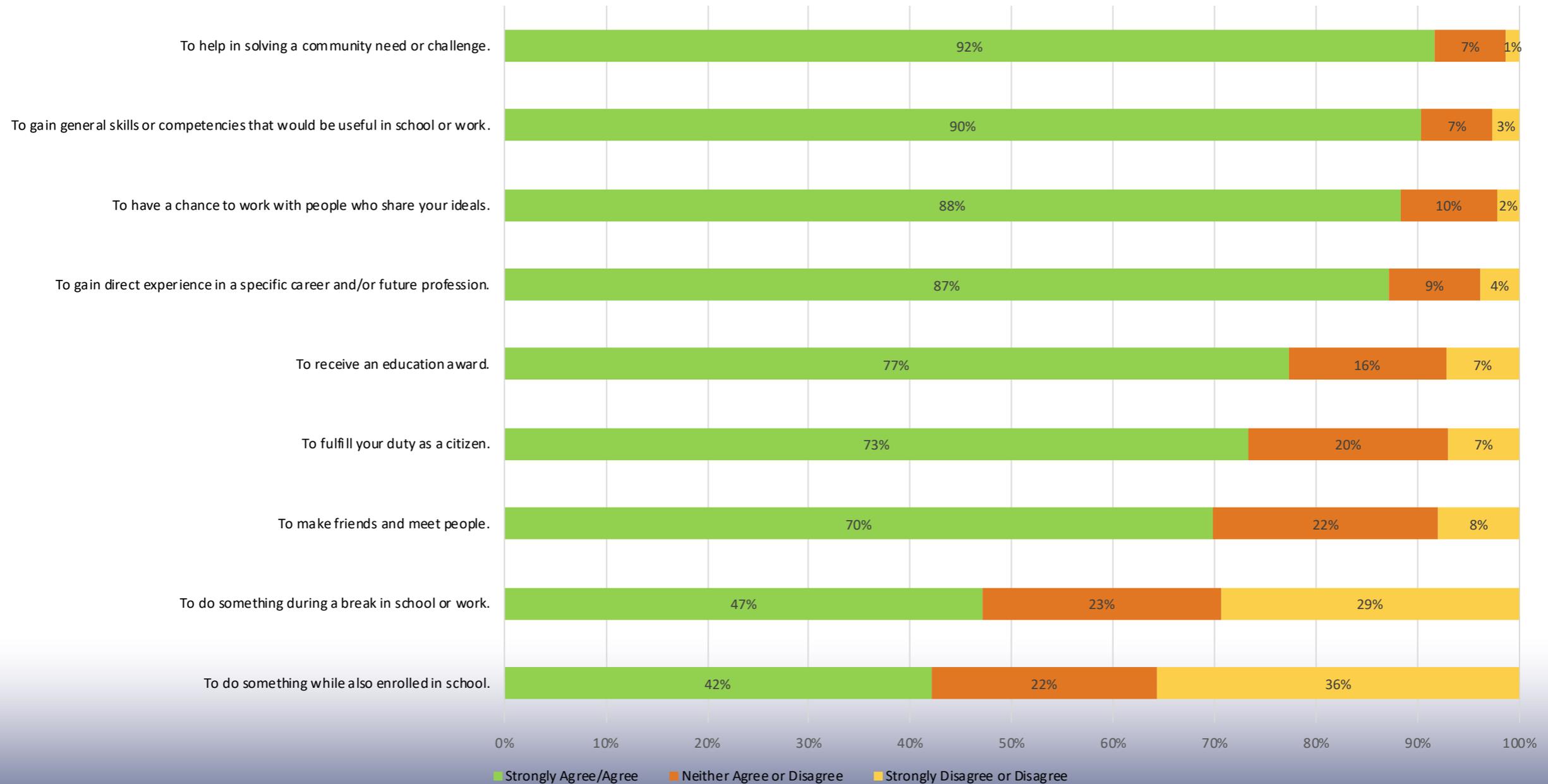
### Examples include:

- ❖ CNCS's "Be the Greater Good"
- ❖ SBP's "Get Paid, Learn Skills, Repay Student Loans, Do Good"
- ❖ Teach for America's "Change Starts Here - Become a Teacher,"
- ❖ Service Year Alliance's "a Better You. A Greater us."



# Motivation for Joining AmeriCorps

People join AmeriCorps for a variety of reasons. How much do you agree that each of the following reasons motivated you to join?





# Elements of Effective Content

## Incorporate pictures, illustrations, video, and infographics

- ❖ Pictures: A picture is worth a thousand words. When designing recruitment material for your program, make sure to use of high quality pictures to help illustrate what the Member experience is all about
- ❖ Studies conducted by Service Year Alliance found that pictures that showcase non-staged smiling Members are most effective (regardless of the service activity)





# Elements of Effective Content

## Video

If a picture is worth a thousand words, how much is a video worth?

- ❖ Shorter videos are typically more effective (30sec-1min) and keep in mind about 20% of people will leave after the first 10 seconds of your video
  - Try to include important info and CTAs first
  - Explain what the viewer is about to see, and how it is of benefit to them.
- ❖ All programs are encouraged to develop an AmeriCorps Member recruitment video that highlights the program's Member experience and include the video on the applicant landing page
  - If your program offers several position types, consider making multiple videos that discusses each specific position and provide a direct link to those videos as part of the associated position description





# Elements of Effective Content

## **FREE RESOURCE ALERT!**

**Bitable** - <https://biteable.com/>

Bitable is a free online tool that can be used to create simple animated videos that can help draw attention to your online recruitment initiatives. You can create your own video from scratch or use one of the free templates available on the site. Additional features can also be purchased.

**Piktochart** - <https://piktochart.com/formats/infographics/>

Web-based infographic application which allows users without intensive experience as graphic designers to easily create infographics and visuals using themed templates.

**Gify** - <https://giphy.com/>

Find trending gifs or create your own gifs at Giphy.com. Put multiple pictures together in a slideshow then add captions or stickers and export it out into a gif file.

**Canva** - [www.canva.com/](http://www.canva.com/)

Canva is a graphic-design tool website, founded in 2012. It uses a drag-and-drop format and provides access to over a million photographs, graphics, and fonts.

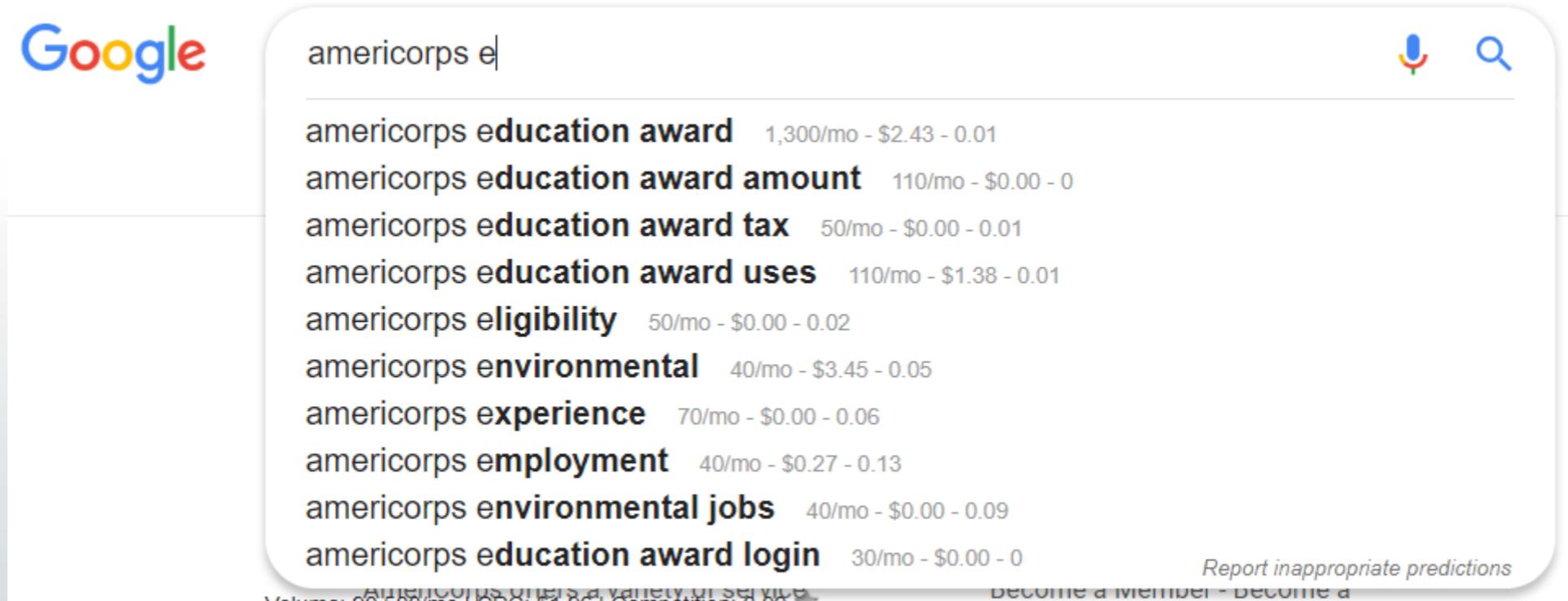


# Search Engine Optimization

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

**Keywords Everywhere** - <https://keywordseverywhere.com/>

The Keywords Everywhere extension is a free keyword tool that can be easily installed on either Chrome or Firefox. The extension shows you useful google keyword search volume, cost per click and competition data of keywords on multiple websites.





# Campaign Ideas

## Member and Alumni Spotlights

- ❖ Member spotlights via social media posts, newsletter articles, etc. can not only help bring additional awareness to your program, but they can also assist with facilitating a positive service experience for the current Members who are featured
- ❖ Brief Member quotes help succinctly illustrate how serving with the program will make someone feel
- ❖ Highlighting program alumni can help illustrate how prospective candidates can leverage the service experience to advance their careers





# Campaign Ideas

## **Service Year Alliance – This Was My Office:**

- ❖ Throughout 2018, Service Year Alliance was encouraging AmeriCorps programs to join their coordinated recruitment marketing campaign and highlight their Members’ “offices” in order to inspire young people to think outside the box when making decisions about their futures
- ❖ Full campaign details, as well as helpful templates can be found at the following web address: [https://about.servicyear.org/my\\_office\\_campaign](https://about.servicyear.org/my_office_campaign)





# Campaign Ideas

- ❖ Clarify AmeriCorps Misconceptions
- ❖ Reason # \_\_\_\_ to Join
- ❖ Five stages of becoming an AmeriCorps Member
  - 1. Shock 2. Excitement 3. Panic 4. Acceptance (You got this!) 5. Success*
- ❖ Tag a Friend Who Would Love Our Mission
- ❖ City Highlights – Top 10
- ❖ Play Off Timely Topics Like National Parks Day
- ❖ Survey or Poll
- ❖ Behind the Scenes
- ❖ Write a Post-Event Summary
- ❖ Interview Industry Experts and/or Alumni
- ❖ Detail a Day in the Life of a Member
- ❖ Record a Guided Tour of Your Program and Service Sites
- ❖ Why Service Matters
- ❖ Member Social Media Takeover
- ❖ Truth or Dare –
  - Provide a truth about how your organization impacts the community or a fact about a gap that your organization is trying to fill. Then dare candidates to take action.*
- ❖ Trivia Questions
- ❖ Create a GIF that describes your service experience



# Think Outside the Box





# Member Support

## **Online Reviews**

- ❖ Many potential applicants will review an organization's online "employee" reviews on sites such as Glassdoor or Indeed to help them decide whether or not to apply or serve with a program
- ❖ Make a personalized request to high-performing Members, alumni, staff, and volunteers asking them to complete a positive review of the program

## **Boost Social Media Posts**

- ❖ Request that AmeriCorps Members boost (i.e. like, share, etc.) your program's social media recruitment posting
- ❖ It is important that you make as much effort as possible to eliminate any barriers to their participation
  - Send the posting links and sample language via email
  - Ask them to use their phones to share the post on-the-spot during a team meetings or service events

## **Ask Members to Make Introductions to Key Recruitment Partners**

- ❖ College Professors, Faculty, and Staff
- ❖ Student Clubs and Organizations
- ❖ Church Groups



# Candidate Support

## **Use the Interview Pool to Source Applicants**

- ❖ Establish a standardized system for requesting high-quality interviewees to recommend additional friends, family, and acquaintances to apply to the program
- ❖ Consider sending brief “thank-you “emails after good interviews that also ask if the candidate could provide contact information for friends, family, or colleagues that they think may also be interested in joining the program

# ASC Mentimeter Word Cloud

**What virtual resources are your programs using to recruit/interview virtually?**

## **Instructions**

Go to: *menti.com*

Type: *77 28 55*



# Open Discussion

**What other changes have you seen?**



**Happy Recruiting!**