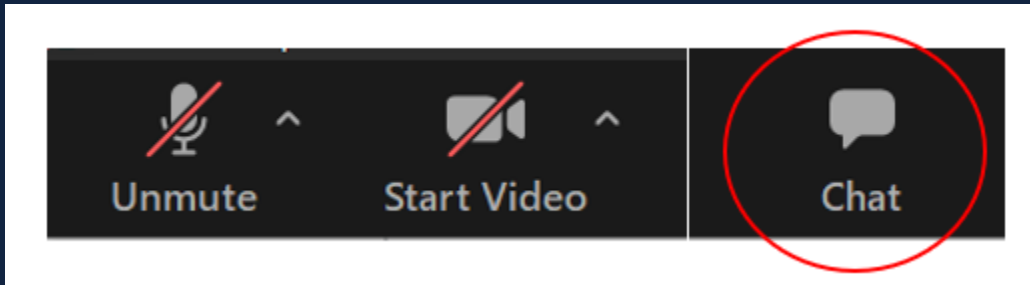


Research and Evidence Webinar Series:

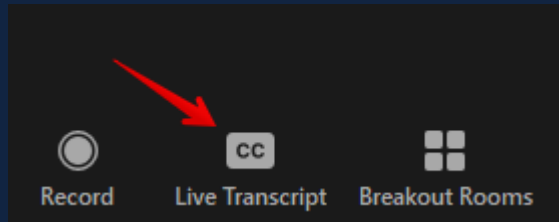
Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits

February 10, 2022

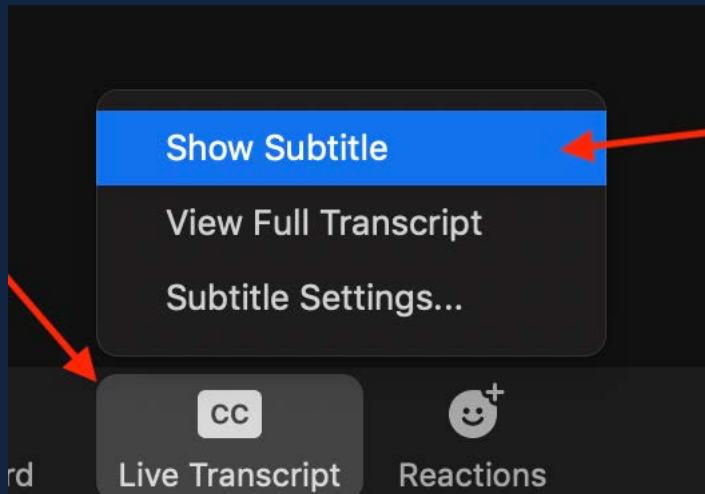
Welcome!



Please be advised that all lines have been muted to avoid background noises and to allow for greater engagement.



Please use chat feature to submit any questions throughout the presentations. Select *Everyone* when submitting your questions. We will read your questions for you.



Closed captions are available. To activate closed caption, please select click the *Live Transcript* button and select *Show Subtitles*.

Welcome and Introduction

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service
Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits



Mary Hyde, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Research and Evaluation
AmeriCorps

Speaker

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service
Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits



Mark Hager, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, School of Community
Resources and Development
Arizona State University

Slouching Toward Volunteer Management Capacity



Mark Hager
Arizona State University
AmeriCorps Webinar
February 10, 2022

Volunteering is a Social Contract

- People have lots of options for how to spend their time. Netflix is a top option.
- Some folks want to volunteer in community organizations!
- If organizations do not make good use of their time, volunteers walk away.
- The quality of the volunteer program and the quality of volunteer engagement with mission determines how volunteers see their experience.

Volunteer Administration: Real Work!

- Interface with staff to **define** volunteer roles
- Craft policies and position descriptions
- Project an inviting volunteer work environment
- Regularly **recruit** prospective volunteers
- Interview and **screen** for good matches
- Connect volunteers with appropriate staff
- Facilitate **training** of volunteers
- Train staff in working with volunteers
- Ensure proper **supervision** of volunteers
- Facilitate regular **communication** with volunteers
- Collect relevant **assessment** information
- Organize appropriate **recognition** of volunteer work
- Communicate value of volunteers to stakeholders

What do we know about volunteer management capacity?

- 2003 Volunteer Management Capacity (VMC) Study, funded by AmeriCorps and the UPS Foundation

<http://webarchive.urban.org/publications/410963.html>

- 2018-2019 VMC-2 Study, funded by AmeriCorps

https://volunteeralive.org/volunteer_management_capacity.php

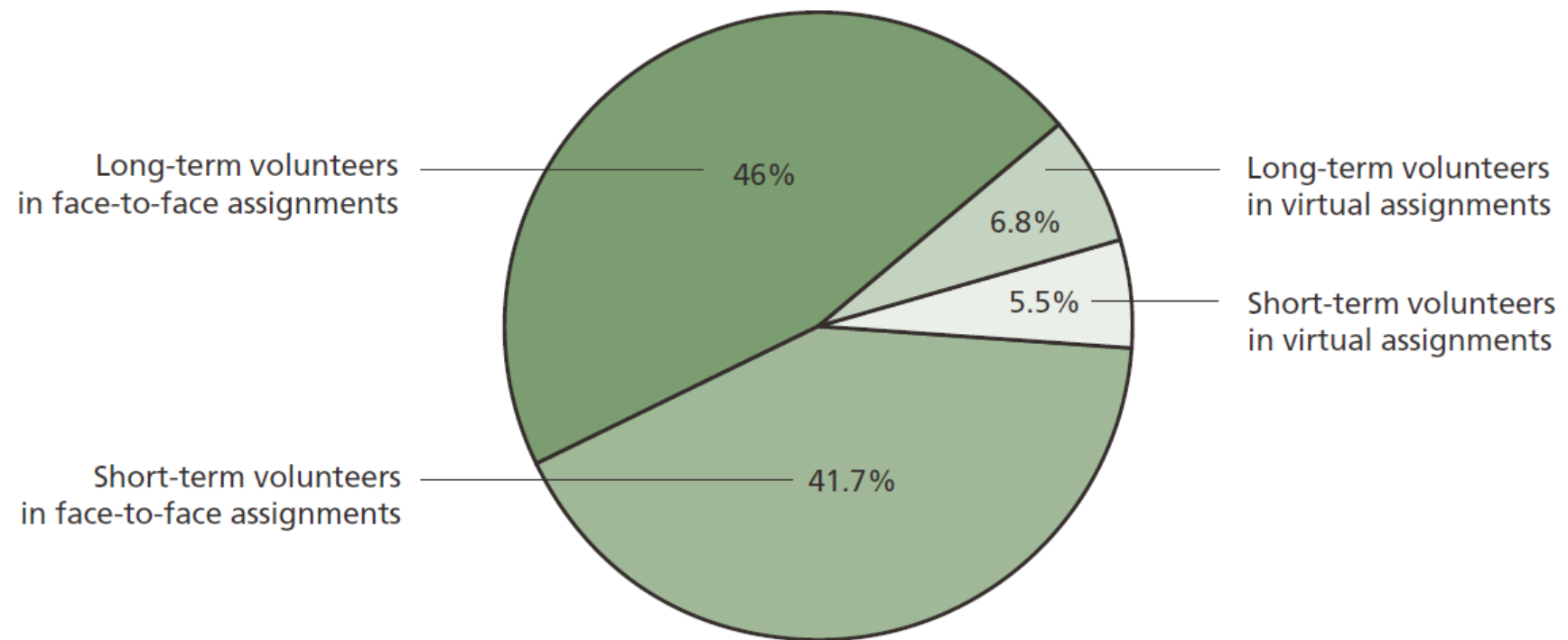


Professor Jeff Brudney



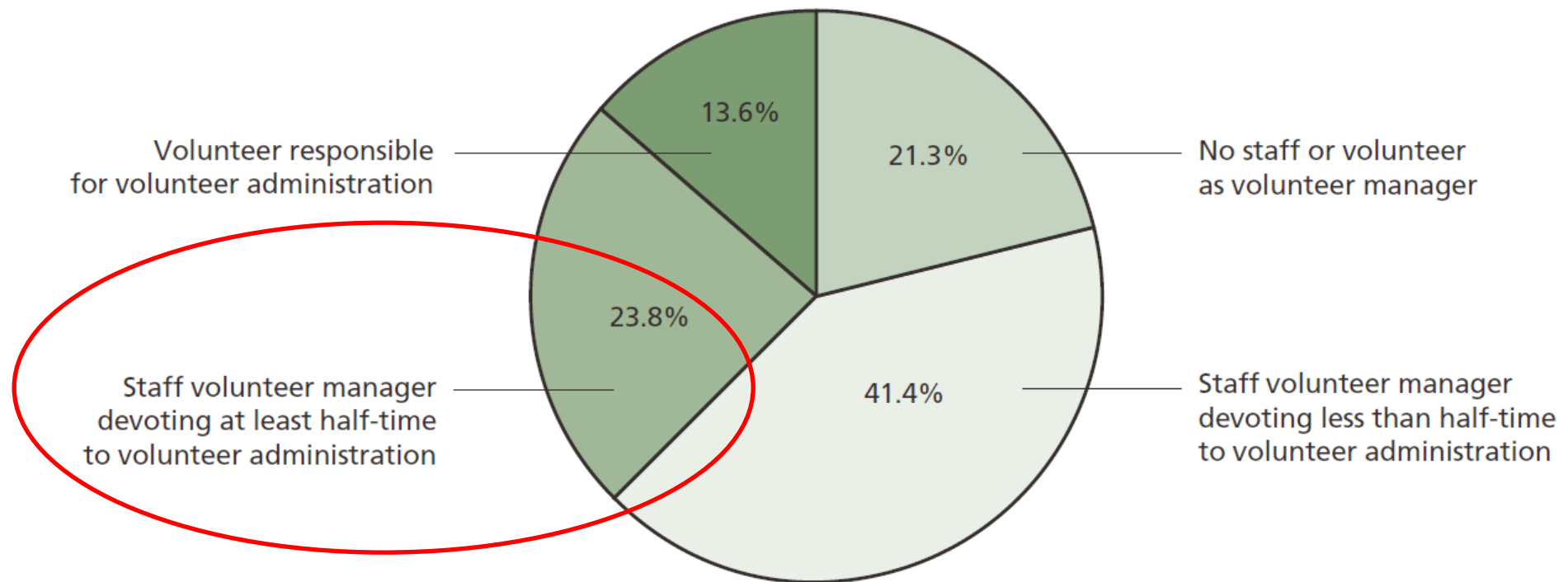
The advent of the episodic volunteer

Figure 4. Distribution of Long-term, Short-term, Face-to-face, and Virtual Volunteers in 2019



Professional volunteer resource managers are a distinct minority

Figure 5. Volunteer Management Spheres

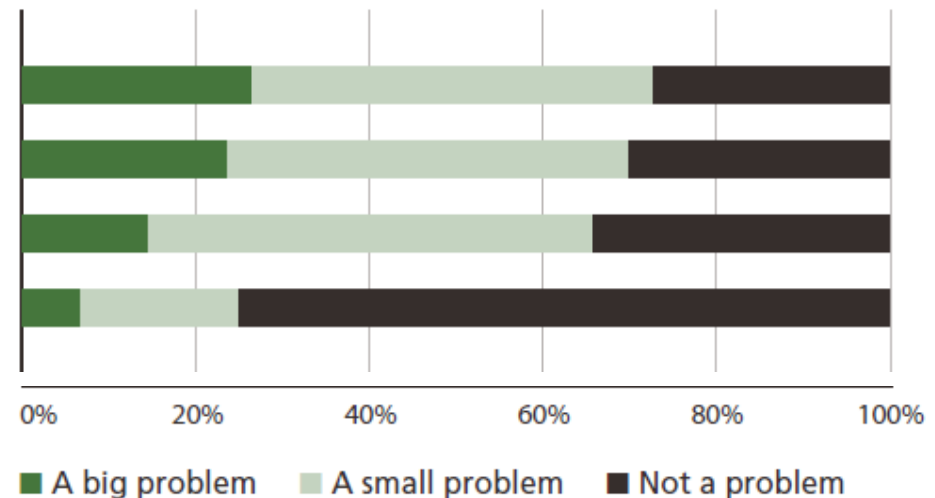


Most nonprofits have a problem recruiting volunteers

Figure 8. Percentage of Nonprofits that Cite Various Challenges as a *Big Problem*, a *Small Problem*, and *Not a Problem* in Their Volunteer Programs

Recruitment

- Recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers
- Recruiting volunteers available during the workday
- Recruiting volunteers with the right skills or expertise
- Having more volunteers than the organization can accommodate

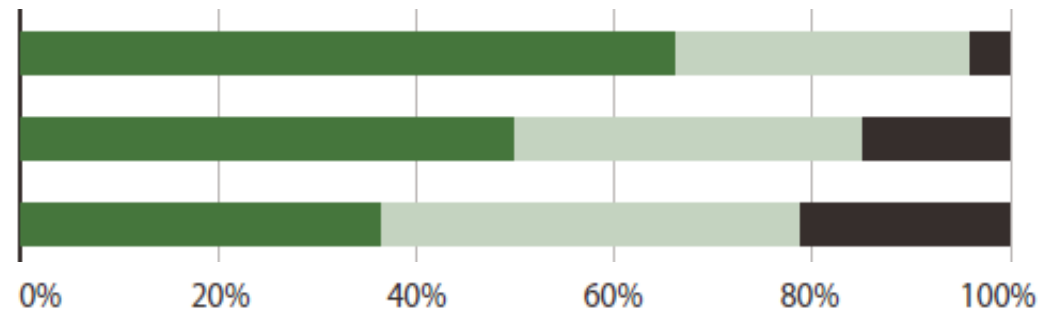


Are recruitment and placement practices in place?

Adoption of Volunteer Management Practices

Recruitment and Placement

- Matching of volunteers to appropriate tasks or jobs
- Screening procedures to identify suitable volunteers
- Written policies and job/position descriptions for volunteer involvement



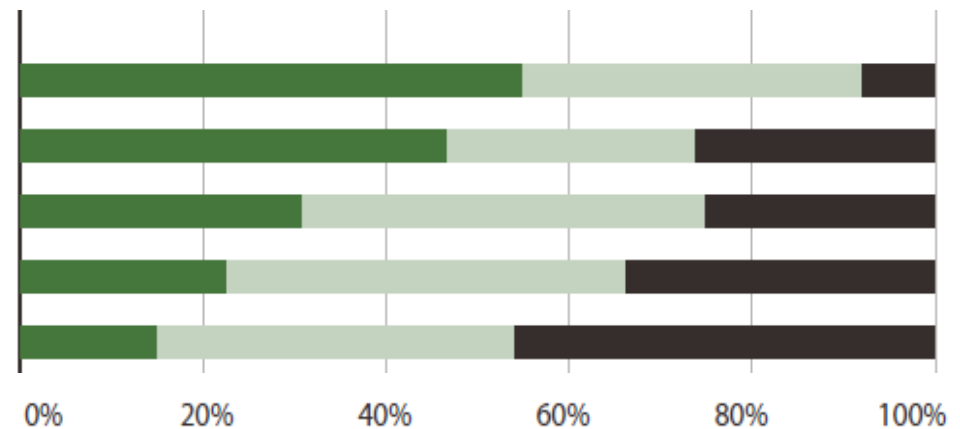
■ Adopted to a large degree ■ Adopted to some degree ■ Not adopted

Are volunteer support practices in place?

Adoption of Volunteer Management Practices

Support

- Regular supervision of volunteers
- Liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers
- Recognition activities, such as award ceremonies, for volunteers
- Training and professional development opportunities for volunteers
- Training for paid staff in working with volunteers



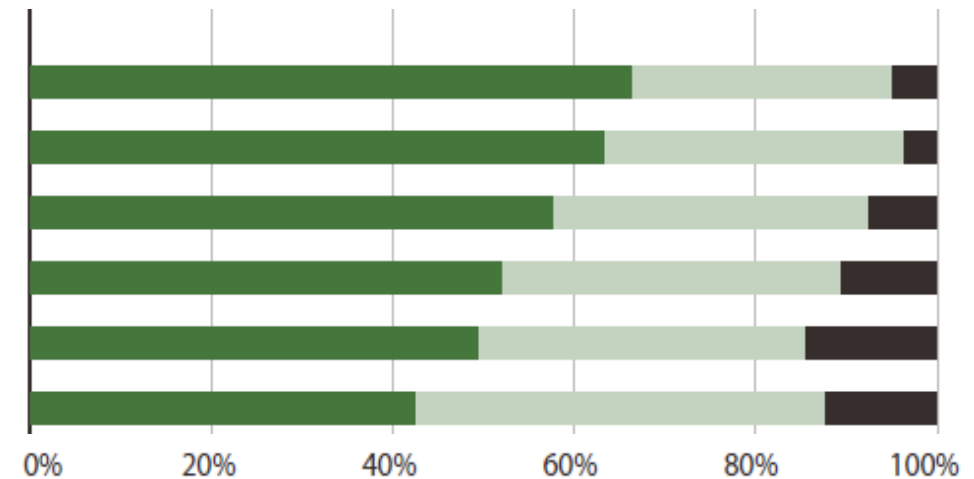
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Are communication practices in place?

Adoption of Volunteer Management Practices

Communication

- Communication of value of volunteers to volunteers
- Regular in-person communication with volunteers
- Communication of value of volunteers to the board of directors
- Regular technology-mediated communication with volunteers
- Communication of value of volunteers to funders
- Communication of value of volunteers to the general public



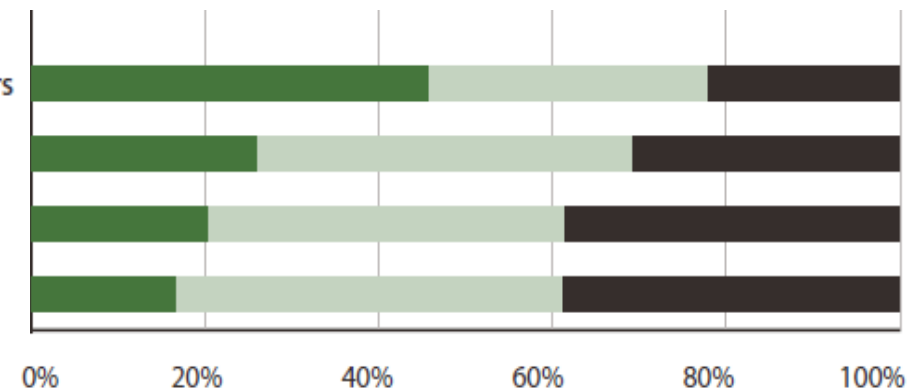
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Are assessment practices in place?

Adoption of Volunteer Management Practices

Assessment

- Regular collection of information on volunteer numbers and hours
- Annual measurement of the impacts volunteers have
- Calculation and communication of organization's return on investment in volunteers
- Regular review of volunteer experience or performance with individual volunteers



■ Adopted to a large degree ■ Adopted to some degree ■ Not adopted

Connecting Dots

- Volunteerism is a primary way that citizens engage their communities.
People need engagement.
Organizations need engagers.
- Social contracts to engage don't happen without real work.
Organizations must invest in VMC if they want returns from their volunteers.



Connecting Dots

- Volunteer administration is hard. Before the pandemic **short-term, shallow assignments** gained popularity. During the pandemic, **virtual engagement** increased.
- Too few organizations are **investing in the people and practices** that lead to happy, productive, and committed volunteers.



Connecting Dots

- Over one in five organizations have **no written policies or position descriptions** for volunteers.
- Almost half do **no training of staff** to work with volunteers.
- One in three collect **little to no information** on what their volunteers bring to operations.

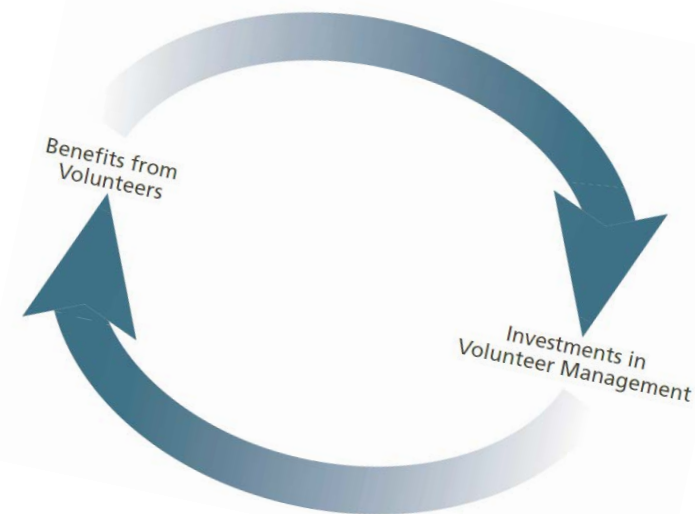


#1

What can we do?

Advocate internally for resources

- Convince boards and top management teams that returns from volunteers only comes from investments in capacity to work with volunteers.





#2

What can we do?

Get a pro VRM in place

- Make the job more than half time!
- Look to Certification in Volunteer Administration <https://cvacert.org/>
- If we can use AmeriCorps members in these slots, they can benefit from serious training.



#3

What can we do?

Build your volunteer program

- Adopt the practices that make sense for your situation.
- No accidents: Build strategic approaches to recruitment, placement, support, communication, and assessment.

VMC = People + Practices



Thank you!

Mark.Hager@asu.edu

Speaker

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service
Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits



Matthew Hudson-Flege, Ph.D., M.S.,

Research Assistant Professor, Institute on Family &
Neighborhood Life

Clemson University



Motivated to Serve: Recruiting and Supporting Diverse AmeriCorps Members

MATTHEW HUDSON-FLEGE, PHD

AMERICORPS WEBINAR

FEBRUARY 10, 2022

The Challenge

AmeriCorps members are diverse in terms of age, education level, and motivation to serve.

How can AmeriCorps program leaders better understand, recruit, and support these diverse members?



Retrieved from: https://scholarships360.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/091214_ameri-corps.jpg

Research Methods

Analyzed data from the AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study*

Analyzed data from the AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Survey*

Conducted interviews with AmeriCorps alumni

Note: Research focused on young adult members (ages 18-25)

**These studies were funded by the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation and are available at:
<https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>*

AmeriCorps Member Profiles

Public Servants

Gappers

Wanderers

Young Idealists



Public Servants

Recent College Graduates

High level of Public Service Motivation

Joining AmeriCorps to springboard
career in nonprofit/public/helping
sectors

*Approximately 1/3 of Young Adult
AmeriCorps Members*

Example: Andrea Rosado



Gappers

Recent College Graduates

Low-Moderate level of Public Service Motivation

Joining AmeriCorps to either

- discover new career pathways
- take a “break” before launching their career

Approximately 1/3 of Young Adult AmeriCorps Members

Example: Ariel Cochrane-Brown



Wanderers

High School Graduates with some college or work experience

Low-Moderate level of Public Service Motivation

Joining AmeriCorps to find direction & purpose

Approximately 17% of Young Adult AmeriCorps Members

Example: Alex Harvey

Note: Young Idealists represent greater racial, gender, & economic diversity than AmeriCorps members as a whole



Young Idealists

Recent High School Graduates

High level of Public Service
Motivation

Joining AmeriCorps to make an
impact in “the real world”

*Approximately 17% of Young Adult
AmeriCorps Members*

Example: Matthew Hudson-Flege

*Note: Young Idealists represent
greater racial, gender, & economic
diversity than AmeriCorps members
as a whole*



Audience Poll

If you served in AmeriCorps, which member profile **best** describes you as an AmeriCorps member?

- a. Public Servant
- b. Gapper
- c. Wanderer
- d. Young Idealist
- e. None of these
- f. N/A- I never served in AmeriCorps

Interview Takeaways- Why they Joined

Wanderers- needed a job; opportunity for new direction

Gappers- needed a job; opportunity to enter nonprofit sector

Public Servants- preparation for graduate school; opportunity to refine career interests within the public service realm

Young Idealists- wanted to make an impact right away; didn't want to go right to college

All- opportunity to do meaningful work

Food for Thought: Some members didn't know they were joining an AmeriCorps program until late in the interview process, or even on their first day! Others had a very narrow impression of what AmeriCorps was based on people they knew who had served.

Interview Takeaways- Recruiting Messages

Wanderers- technical skills learned; education award & health benefits

Gappers- career opportunities; education award & health benefits

Public Servants- career & personal growth opportunities; education award

Young Idealists- hands-on service opportunities & making an impact; education award and supporting career growth

All- Desire to hear authentic stories/testimonials from “people like me,” and an aversion to overly polished marketing campaigns.

Interview Takeaways: Member Support

Helpful:

- Learning new skills (construction)
- “On the Job” training from more experienced members
- Open-door policy from program staff

Needed:

- How to best use Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Preparing for life after AmeriCorps
- Professional growth & development support

Applying these Lessons to College Advising Corps

Recruiting:

Determining which program highlights to emphasize based on prospective member's profile.

Matching a prospective member with a current member/alumni who was "in their shoes"

Member Support:

Personalized professional development coaching.



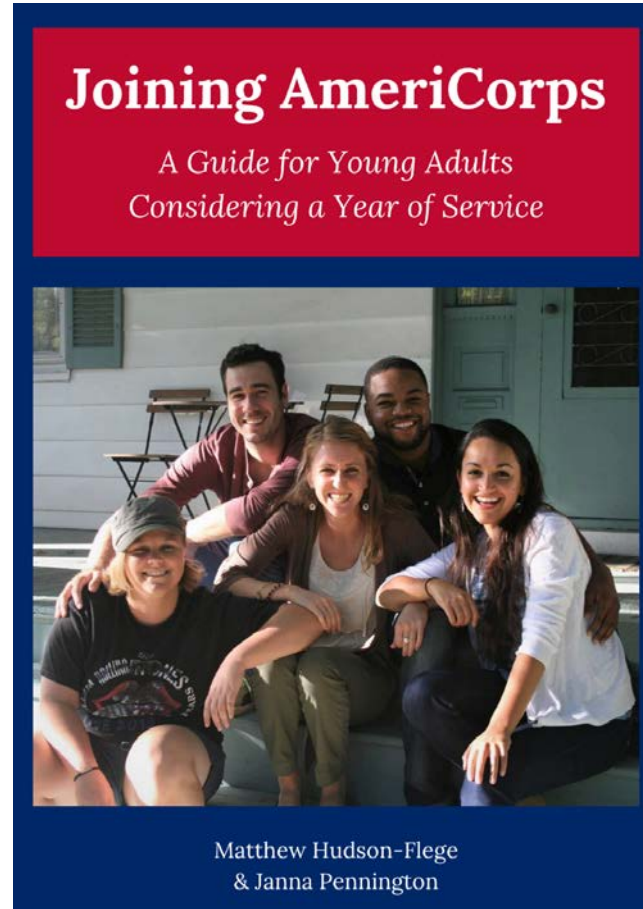
A Resource: *Joining AmeriCorps*

A book for prospective AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps program staff, and educators.

Answering the questions:

- What is AmeriCorps?
- Should I join AmeriCorps?
- How do I join AmeriCorps?
- How do I make the most of my experience?
- How do I prepare for life after AmeriCorps?

Available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or at www.joiningamericorps.com



Matthew Hudson-Flege
mflege@clemson.edu

Thank You

THIS MATERIAL IS BASED UPON WORK FUNDED BY THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION AT AMERICORPS UNDER GRANT NO. 17REHSC001 THROUGH THE NATIONAL SERVICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH GRANT COMPETITION. OPINION OR POINTS OF VIEW EXPRESSED IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF, OR A POSITION THAT IS ENDORSED BY, AMERICORPS.

Reflections

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service
Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits



Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi, MBA

Deputy Director, AmeriCorps State and
National
AmeriCorps

Q&A Discussion

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits



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EVALUATION



AmeriCorps

Questions?

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Research and Evaluation Analyst,
Office of Research and Evaluation,
AmeriCorps

Research and Evidence Webinar Series:

Creating Successful Volunteering and National Service Opportunities: Best Practices and Benefits

February 10, 2022

Thank You!

- The slides and recording will be available at AmeriCorps Impact Webinars.
- Visit: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/webinars> for past webinars and for more information on AmeriCorps Research and Evaluation: evaluation@cns.gov.