

Self Assessment Tool for Improving Programs—Screeners

Introduction

Please rest assured that your anonymity will be protected. Only aggregate responses of all participants will be gathered for the analysis and ongoing development of the self-assessment tool. Neither the Corporation for National and Community Service nor your state commission or any other funders will utilize this information for funding purposes.

Respondent Information

Please select the response that most closely reflects your demographic and employee information.

This assessment tool was developed by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin for leaders in all of the programs funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service and community-based volunteer service programs to identify their needs for training and technical assistance. We know some agencies are funded to manage more than one type of national service program, but we are asking you to select *one* specific Corporation or community volunteer program to assess at a time. Your answer to this question will affect the vocabulary of the assessment tool selected for your use. When fully operational, this assessment tool will create a custom training and technical assistance plan for the user.

1. a. As a manager of volunteers, I work in the following type of organization:

- Nonprofit organization
- Public sector organization with no Corporation funding
- Private or corporate organization
- Public sector organization with funding through the Corporation

b. Among Corporation-funded programs in your organization, please choose only one as a reference point to complete this assessment. The program I am assessing is:

- AmeriCorps' State
- AmeriCorps' National Direct
- AmeriCorps' Education Award Program
- AmeriCorps/VISTA
- AmeriCorps/NCCC
- AmeriCorps Tribal Program
- Senior Corps - Foster Grandparents Program
- Senior Corps - Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
- Senior Corps - Senior Companion Program
- Learn and Serve - K-12
- Learn and Serve - Higher Education
- Learn and Serve – Community-Based
- Learn and Serve – Tribal Program
- Volunteer Center
- Other Community-Based Volunteer Program
- Other, please specify: _____

2. The 5-digit zip code where I work is:**3. My highest educational level is**

Did not finish high school

High school diploma (or GED)

Some college

Associate Degree

Bachelor Degree

Master Degree

Doctoral Degree

Vocational/Technical Training

4. My race/ethnic identification is

African-American/Black

Hispanic/Mexican-American

Anglo-American/White

Asian-American/Pacific Islander/Native American Indian

Multiracial/Other

5. I am

Female

Male

6. My age (in years)

Less than 21

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Over 60

7. Years of experience I have managing volunteers:

Less than 2

2-5

6-10

11-15

Over 15

Not applicable

8. Years of experience I have managing national service participants:

Less than 2

2-5

6-10

11-15

Over 15

Not applicable

9. Years our national service program has been in existence:

Less than 2
2-5
6-10
11-15
Over 15
Not applicable
Don't know

10. Estimated size of the sponsor organization's (the agency or organization housing your national service program) annual budget:

Less than \$500,000
\$500,000-\$999,999
\$1M-\$4,999,999
\$5M-\$9,999,999
\$10M-\$24,999,999
More than \$25 M
Not applicable
Don't know

11. Estimated size of the Corporation funded program annual budget (including matching funds):

Less than \$100,000
\$100,000-\$249,999
\$250,000-\$499,999
\$500,000-\$999,999
\$1M-\$4,999,999
More than \$5M
Not applicable
Don't know

12. If separate from the national service program listed above, estimated annual budget of the community volunteer program:

Less than \$100,000
\$100,000-\$249,999
\$250,000-\$499,999
\$500,000-\$999,999
\$1M-\$4,999,999
More than \$5M
Not applicable
Don't know

13. Estimated number of FTE (Full Time Equivalents) employees in the sponsor organization:

Less than 5
5-10
11-25
26-50
51-75
76-100

101-200
 More than 200
 Not applicable
 Don't know

14. Estimated number of national service participants (e.g., AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn & Serve) in the sponsor organization (not FTEs but the actual number):

Less than 5
 5-10
 11-25
 26-50
 51-75
 76-100
 101-200
 201-300
 301-500
 More than 500
 Not applicable
 Don't know

15. Estimated number of community volunteers in the organization (not FTEs but the actual number):

Less than 5
 5-10
 11-25
 26-50
 51-100
 101-250
 251-500
 501-1,000
 1,001-2,500
 More than 2,500
 Not applicable
 Don't know

A Note on Terminology

As already noted, this assessment tool is intended for leaders in any of the Corporation for National and Community Service programs and for community based programs that work with volunteers. Based on your answer to #1 above, the statements in the tool will be automatically worded to reflect the vocabulary of your program. However, here is a guide to the word choices you may see:

- *Volunteer:* Even though some Corporation participants receive modest financial remuneration, the word “volunteer” has always been used as an umbrella term for all the programs. Therefore, it is used here as the default word choice if other phrasing seems awkward. Everyone completing the assessment tool should interpret the word “volunteer” as meaning whatever type of service-providing participant is your primary focus. Note that *board members* are also volunteers, though they fulfill a legally-defined

governance role.

- *Volunteerism*: Used when a statement refers to the full scope of volunteering and community service in all its varieties, especially when discussing the entire professional field or the concept/philosophy of citizen participation.
- *Member*: Refers to AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps/VISTA participant.
- *Service Participant*: A general term most relevant to full-time service programs and students engaged in service-learning.
- *Student*: School-based service participant.
- *Community*: Refers to the local environment in which an agency or program operates, including the public at large, other nonprofit and government agencies, businesses, faith communities, etc. All volunteers and service participants obviously *come from* the “community,” but become part of the organization once accepted. So, when the assessment tool uses the word “community,” it should be interpreted as all the people and groups *outside* of the organization.
- *Community Partner*: In this context, a “Community Partner” fills a role defined by a Corporation grant. The term is used for an organization that serves as a host site for program participants, such as an agency in which RSVP volunteers are placed, an agency providing service-learning projects for students, or any organization accepting one or more AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps/VISTA members from a grantee managing a larger corps.
- *Staff*: Although in general usage both paid and unpaid workers can be considered “staff,” in this tool, “staff” means “employee.”

Marking Instructions

This assessment tool contains a series of descriptions that represent characteristics or indicators of an effective program that uses national service participants and/or volunteers. Please read each item and decide to what extent it describes your program at this point in time. There are no right or wrong answers. Most programs will rate some items as more similar and some as less similar. Please be truthful and describe your program as it really is, not as you would like it to be. If you do not have any information about a particular statement, indicate that by selecting “Don’t know.” If the statement is not applicable to you, indicate that by selecting “Not applicable.”

Please rate the degree to which each of the following items reflects your current program:

- 5 = Exactly like my program
- 4 = Very much like my program
- 3 = Moderately like my program
- 2 = Somewhat like my program
- 1 = Not at all like my program
- 0 = Don’t know
- n = Not applicable

Board & Advisory Leadership

- 1 Our board members understand their role as volunteers in a governance position and provide strong leadership.
- 2 Our board understands the work of the program and its role in the community.
- 3 Our board members support the work of *volunteers* in achieving the goals of the organization.

Organizational Culture

- 4 Senior leadership speaks positively and passionately about the role of *volunteers*.
- 5 Decision makers in the organization are accessible to employees, volunteers, and community members.
- 6 Decision makers in the organization support our program objectives.

Program Accountability

- 7 Our program's strategic plan is based on needs assessment and evaluation data.
- 8 Our program uses valid and reliable evaluation tools to measure program effectiveness.
- 9 Our program measures the performance of staff, volunteers, members, board members, and program partners.

Financial Management

10. Our program expends funds in accordance with budget plans and in line with board oversight.
- 11 Our program practices effective financial management.
- 12 Our program manages grants effectively.

Staffing & Development

- 13 Our other program employees understand and effectively apply the principles of volunteer management.
- 14 Our program trains employees to work with *volunteers*.
- 15 Our program *volunteers* are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Marketing & Communication

- 16 Our program facilitates regular communication with **internal** stakeholders about volunteer value, impact, and outcomes.
- 17 Our program facilitates regular communication with **external** stakeholders about volunteer value, impact, and outcomes.

18 Our program communicates and markets effectively.

Infrastructure

19 Our program provides adequate space for volunteers to work.

20 Our program provides adequate equipment and supplies for volunteers to perform their work.

21 Our program implements effective volunteer recruitment methods, such as presentations, written materials, media events, and email.

Service Learning

22 Our program offers consistent opportunities for debriefing and reflection of the service experience.

23 Our program designs service projects that build on the knowledge and the skills directly related to the course.

24 Our program helps young people identify the relationship between service experiences and the skills associated with citizenship.

Community Collaboration

25 Our organization retains its partnerships with other organizations over time.

26 Our organization regularly gathers and shares effective practices with other community-based organizations.

27 Our organization encourages community involvement to ensure long-term sustainability of the program.

28 Our program employees and volunteers participate in a wide array of activities to learn about effective practices.

29 Our program utilizes community input and feedback to develop new program ideas.

30 Our program conducts periodic data collection from community stakeholders on opportunities, challenges, and trends.

Volunteer Management

31 Our program clearly defines *volunteer* roles and responsibilities.

32 Our program creates service placements based on needs assessments.

- 33 Our program provides clear lines of *volunteer* supervision.
- 34 Our program engages *volunteers* for regular input on program operations.
- 35 Our program leaders provide *volunteers* clear feedback on their work.
- 36 Our program offers service opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.