

CORE SUSQUEHANNA AMERICORPS

# MEMBER HANDBOOK



# AmeriCorps

**2022-2023**

coreamericorps.org  
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## Welcome to AmeriCorps!

As an AmeriCorps member, you will set an example of caring and community spirit that America needs.

Our country has difficult problems and big challenges: Too many children are falling behind their classmates; many families don't feel safe in their own neighborhoods; and others can't afford decent housing, health care, or food. During your term of service as an AmeriCorps member, you won't solve these problems single-handedly, but you will play an important role in bringing communities together to help solve these and other problems.

You are carrying on an American tradition of service that dates back to our nation's founding more than 200 years ago. Americans have always found ways to help others and make our nation stronger through military service, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Peace Corps, and in other ways. The 800,000-plus Americans who have served in AmeriCorps have done what other generations of Americans have done before – taken an active role as citizens to make a difference for themselves and others. What happens next is up to you.

This guide is intended to describe AmeriCorps and your role in it, but your AmeriCorps experience will be what you make of it. Because you have made a commitment to serve, you are a role model for people of all ages in your community and across the country. Show others the importance of serving. Demonstrate what it means to be an active citizen. Uphold and pass on the ethic of service by involving others in your service projects, telling people about your experience with AmeriCorps, and encouraging your friends to join AmeriCorps.

Best wishes for a successful and rewarding term serving your neighbors and your nation as an AmeriCorps Member!

Jessica Krispin, Director, CORE Susquehanna

Karen Reber, Member Coordinator, CORE Susquehanna

## Overview of AmeriCorps

### Your Commitment

As an AmeriCorps member, you are expected to adhere to the AmeriCorps pledge. The pledge below represents the commitment you have taken to serve not just this year, but in the years ahead:

“I will get things done for America - to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.”

### Your Assignment

As an AmeriCorps member, you may serve in a community organization, a school, or a national park. You may serve at several different locations, and you may even travel to help other communities in your area. One of the strengths of AmeriCorps is the range of services its members provide helping make children healthier, schools better, streets safer, and the environment cleaner.

### The Big Picture

AmeriCorps has four main goals:

#### Getting Things Done

AmeriCorps members help communities solve problems in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs (like health and housing) by serving directly and by getting other people to serve as volunteers.

#### Strengthening Communities

AmeriCorps members help unite individuals from all different backgrounds and organizations of all kinds in a common effort to improve communities.

#### Encouraging Responsibility

AmeriCorps members explore and exercise their responsibilities to their communities, their families, and themselves during their service experience and throughout their lives.

#### Expanding Opportunity

AmeriCorps helps those who help America. AmeriCorps members receive awards to further their education or to pay back student loans. They also gain valuable job experience, specialized training, and other skills.

### **AmeriCorps is an Opportunity**

Joining AmeriCorps is a way to put your idealism into action. As an AmeriCorps member, you can help make the world a better place: help children learn, protect the environment, or bring needed services to a low-income community.

There are opportunities in AmeriCorps for anyone who is willing to do something special, something unique, something exciting.

### **AmeriCorps is an Experience**

AmeriCorps is a real-life education and work experience wrapped into one. As a member, you will learn teamwork, leadership, responsibility and other essential skills that will help you for the rest of your life. And you will gain the personal satisfaction of taking on challenges and seeing results.

### **AmeriCorps's Mission**

The CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps program partners with existing educational, health, and human service organizations to provide an array of support services to children, adults, and families.

CORE (Community, Opportunity, Responsibility, and Empowerment) Susquehanna AmeriCorps partners with non-profit organizations within the Pennsylvania heartland. Members are directed to organizations whose service goals keep with the identified issue areas of health, education, and other human service needs.

CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Corporation plays a vital role in supporting the American culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility.

### **Tradition of Service**

The AmeriCorps program was created in the spirit of community service, which has been a traditional and integral part of our American history. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt organized the Civilian Conservation Corps, which is responsible for having built many of our nation's parks and conservation areas. Following World War II, the GI Bill was created and military service to our country was awarded with educational benefits. In 1960, President John

F. Kennedy sought to relieve international distress and poverty through citizen service abroad, by creating the Peace Corps. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson was instrumental in the creation of the VISTA program as a domestic Peace Corps to address community issues here at home.

Experimental youth and senior service programs sprang up all over the country during the 1970s and 1980s. With this movement, the private and non-profit sectors began to play a substantial role in both advocacy for, and the development of, volunteer and citizen service.

In 1990, President George H. Bush developed the Commission on National and Community Service to engage U.S. citizens in community programs designed to combat illiteracy and poverty, and to address environmental issues. Further expansion of national service took place in 1993 with the signing of the National Community Service Trust Act by President William J. Clinton. This law created a national headquarters that would administer the funds set aside to support community service programs including VISTA, The Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, and a newly created AmeriCorps.

In 1994, local community leaders met to propose the submission of a grant that would allow this rural region of Pennsylvania to receive some of the federal funds set aside for community service. As a result of that initial meeting, Union-Snyder Community Action Agency became the administering agency for the regional AmeriCorps initiative and CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps was created.

CORE Susquehanna partnered with non-profit and governmental organizations across six (6) Pennsylvania counties and addressed all four major AmeriCorps initiatives: education, human needs, public safety, and environment.

Then, in 2001, following the September 11 tragedies, President George W. Bush asked all Americans to give their time and talents back to their communities; at least two years or 4,000 hours over their lifetime. On July 3, 2003, President Bush signed the Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act, which nearly doubled the number of AmeriCorps members.

In 2009, the Serve America Act was passed under President Barack H. Obama, continuing the legacy of expanding national service opportunities.

Since the inception of the CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps program, thousands of students have been tutored in math and reading, thousands of children and families were provided with services that would have otherwise gone undone, thousands of after-school and educational activities were presented to at-risk youths, thousands of volunteer hours were generated, and a unique collaborative effort of community organizations was formed.

## National Service – How It All Connects

The **AmeriCorps Agency** is located in Washington D.C. and provides the funding and regulations for National Service Programs among others.

The **AmeriCorps Grant** is made available to states through the State Commission Office. In Pennsylvania, AmeriCorps grants are awarded to **PennSERVE**, which is part of the Governor's Office of Citizen Service located in Harrisburg and a component of the Department of Labor & Industry.

Community based organizations such as **Union-Snyder Community Action Agency** apply to receive an AmeriCorps grant through a lengthy proposal process. Union-Snyder CAA administers the AmeriCorps grant referred to as **CORE Susquehanna**.

**CORE Susquehanna** partners with non-profit organizations to provide opportunities for AmeriCorps members to complete a term of service.

### Contact Information

When member, site supervisors, or others have questions or concerns, CORE staff can be reached at 570-374-0181 or toll free at 877-497-1257.

CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps is located in the Snyder East Community Services Building.

Address: CORE Susquehanna  
713 Bridge Street, Suite 10  
Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

\*Tuesdays: 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

CORE staff's preferred method of communication is email. Be sure to check email frequently!

### Program Staff

AmeriCorps Director – Jessica Krispin (ext. 194)

[jkrispin@union-snydercaa.org](mailto:jkrispin@union-snydercaa.org)

Member Coordinator – Karen Reber (ext. 192)

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Fiscal – Kurt Laird (ext. 176)

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## Training

### Philosophy

Training is an important component of the AmeriCorps program. CORE Susquehanna trainings are designed to add knowledge, understanding, and some practical skills to assist members in personal, professional, and AmeriCorps development.

As an AmeriCorps member, you are neither an employee nor a volunteer, but something unique and special. First, you are a part of a National Service organization, created to “get things done” in the communities in which we live. Second, you are part of an organization, CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps, which is dedicated to community change and development. Third, you are a catalyst for change at your service site, helping to meet the needs of that organization in the community. The convening/training opportunities are provided to assist with developing your potential in each of these areas. The convening/training component is part of the contract Union-Snyder CAA has with the Corporation for National Service. In addition, CORE Susquehanna is committed to providing citizenship training for members.

Convenings are the one opportunity each month for the whole Corps to meet together, to become acquainted, and to develop a sense of belonging. Attendance is required at all monthly convenings. Absences are only permitted for serious illness or attending a funeral with prior permission. You must call or email the AmeriCorps staff to discuss your absence prior to the start of the convening. Service at your site and convenings are not competing interests. They are two components of the same program and work together in your experience of being an AmeriCorps member.

A minimum of 80% of your AmeriCorps hours should be in service to your assigned site. A maximum of 20% of your hours may be toward CORE Susquehanna training and special service projects. A maximum of 10% of your hours can be used for fundraising.

### Member Training

Members attend a three-day orientation on August 30, 31, and Sept 1, the first week of the program.

**Day 1:** CORE staff review the AmeriCorps program with all members. Members complete necessary paperwork to enroll in AmeriCorps. Members are divided into small service groups and begin the process of deciding on a community need that will be addressed through their small service groups.

**Day 2:** All members participate in a full day of outdoor team building activities provided by AmeriCorps staff.

**Day 3:** Members attend training in CPR and First Aid.

1. Monthly convening is held 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and is mandatory.
2. There are several group service projects that the members will accomplish together.
3. Attendance at group projects is mandatory.
4. Small service teams complete a group project that meets a community need and can be accomplished any time throughout the year.

If the budget allows, members are given the opportunity to experience a civic trip.

Members may receive training in the following categories:

- Government/civics and citizenship
- Volunteerism and recruitment
- Conflict resolution and stress
- Leadership training
- Public speaking
- Financial and time management
- Diversity
- First aid/CPR
- Job search information
- Disaster preparedness
- After school tutoring

## Convening Schedule

Monthly convenings will be held in the community room of the Snyder East Community Services Building located at 713 Bridge Street, Selinsgrove. Service projects will be announced as plans are finalized with the partnering non-profit organizations. Occasionally, a date may change due to circumstances beyond our control; it is important for members and sites to be flexible.

Days away from your site include convening and service project days.

### **Scheduled Convenings and Service Projects for the 2020-2021 Service Year:**

- **Tuesday, August 30, 2022:** Orientation – Marina
- **Wednesday, August 31, 2022:** Orientation, Team Building
- **Thursday, September 1, 2022:** Orientation, CPR/First Aid – YMCA @ The Miller Center, Lewisburg PA
- **Thursday September 15, 2022:** September 11 – Service Project – TBD
- **Thursday, October 13, 2022:** Training-Union-Snyder CAA
- **Thursday, November 10, 2022:** Convening – Union-Snyder CAA
- **Thursday, December 8, 2022:** Convening – Union-Snyder CAA
- **Monday, January 16, 2023:** Martin Luther King Day of Service – Details TBA
- **Thursday, February 9, 2023:** Convening – Union-Snyder CAA
- **Thursday March 16, 2023:** AmeriCorps Week --TBD
- **Thursday, April 13, 2023:** Mayor’s Day of Service – TBD
- **Tuesday, May 23, 2023:** Summer Member Orientation
- **Wednesday, May 24, 2023:** Member Planned Service Project
- **Thursday, June 8, 2023:** June Convening
- **Thursday, July 13, 2023:** Life after AmeriCorps
- **August 5, 2023:** Last Day of Program

All convenings are mandatory for members, and sites should prepare for their absence on these pre-scheduled dates.

## Reports

1. Accomplishment Progress Reports: Due in February and July to Jessica at the CORE Susquehanna office. Reports can be found on the CORE Susquehanna website: [www.coreamericorps.org](http://www.coreamericorps.org).

Accomplishment Progress Reports must be signed by the site supervisor and AmeriCorps member.

2. Member Evaluation: To be complete by the site supervisor and is due to the CORE Susquehanna office by February 4, 2023, and August 1, 2023.
3. Reflection Sheets: Due at the end of each month (September – July). Reports can be accessed and submitted online at [www.coreamericorps.com](http://www.coreamericorps.com). Go to member forms/reflection sheet and submit.

Reflection is an invitation to think deeply about our actions so that we may act with more insight and effectiveness in the future. It is probably something you do already; processing, analyzing, and integrating your experiences through writing, discussions with friends, art, etc. As related to service, reflection is the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from service experience. It also helps to examine the larger picture and context in which service occurs (Jim and Pam Toole, Compass Institute). The heart of AmeriCorps is direct service to communities; part of that service, just as vital as our actions, is the digestion of what we do, so that we may grow as citizens both professionally and personally.

“A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions” (Oliver Wendell Holmes).

## Confidentiality Policy

CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps treats the information it holds about members and placement sites with the utmost respect. The list below details what information will or will not be shared.

### **Member Home Address and Phone Number**

This information is not shared with anyone except CORE Susquehanna staff and the partner site/organization without the expressed permission of the member.

### **Member AmeriCorps Application(s)**

Applications may be shared with partner sites during the interview process. A copy is on file in the CORE Susquehanna office.

### **Service Site Address and Phone Number**

This information is considered public and therefore may be shared.

### **Clearances Results Including National Sex Offender Registry, Act 33/34, and FBI Clearances**

CORE Susquehanna is required by law to provide information to sites where the member will interact in any way with vulnerable populations; this information is made available to placement sites upon request.

### **Personnel Files**

Members can send CORE Susquehanna any information they wish to have placed in their file (i.e., news clippings, letters of commendation, etc.). Federal and state monitors will have access to the member's file; no one else will be permitted to access a member's file without his/her expressed permission.

### **Employment or Educational References**

Union-Snyder Community Action Agency's policy is that CORE Susquehanna staff is not able to provide references of any kind.

### **For the Purpose of Promoting the Activities of CORE Susquehanna**

CORE Susquehanna obtains a written consent from each individual member to release information and photographs to:

1. Union-Snyder Community Action Agency
2. Corporation for National Service
3. PennSERVE, The Governor's Office of Citizen Service
4. Member's placement site
5. Local news media
6. Social media
7. CORE Susquehanna website

## **CORE Policies and Procedures**

### **General Policies**

#### **Inform CORE Office**

- Address, email, and phone changes must be reported to the CORE Susquehanna office immediately.
- Report all on-the-job injuries immediately to the Member Coordinator/Program Director. When possible, do so before seeking medical treatment.

#### **Absence/Lateness Policy**

- Notify the site supervisor of all lateness or absence. However, notification does not excuse absence or lateness.
- Lateness will not be tolerated, including schedule at the service site, convenings, and group projects.
- All convenings and service projects are mandatory.

#### **Time-Off Requests and Breaks**

Time off requests must be approved by your site supervisor. If you are requesting more than 3 days off or miss more than 3 days of service, please notify the CORE Susquehanna office.

AmeriCorps members are entitled to breaks. If serving for more than 6 hours, a 30-minute break is required. Please note your time sheet when you are taking breaks. Any “service” lunch breaks must be approved in writing by the CORE Susquehanna office.

#### **Office Etiquette/Dress Code**

During the AmeriCorps member’s orientation, the site supervisor should review office etiquette with the AmeriCorps member to help integrate the member into the site.

Members are expected to dress in a professional manner at the service site. The standard practice of the service site should be followed. Members are representing not only CORE Susquehanna, but also the placement site and themselves. At convenings, a more casual dress is acceptable.

Members who serve a full day are entitled to a lunch break.

#### **CORE Susquehanna/AmeriCorps Identity**

Whenever a member is engaged in Corps-related activities, some form of national identity (i.e. AmeriCorps button, pin, or shirt) should be worn. Partner sites should also display an AmeriCorps placard, identifying the site as a place where an AmeriCorps member is “getting things done”.

### **Personal Business**

Members are discouraged from taking care of personal business, making personal phone calls, texting, Facebook, Snap Chat, Instagram, doing schoolwork, etc. while at the placement site or participating in CORE Susquehanna functions unless they have approval from their site supervisor. As well, members should not bring their own children to their placement site or AmeriCorps functions during the time they are collecting service hours. If unforeseen childcare difficulties should arise, then it is the responsibility of the member to coordinate their service schedule. CORE Susquehanna encourages members to have backup childcare arrangements in place. The exception to this policy is when family and/or friends are invited to a special event.

### **Sharing Information with Fellow CORE Members**

Members may share email and telephone numbers with other members in the group. In fact, the small service groups need to share this information with their team members. Any other shared information is optional. It is forbidden to send out group emails to members for matters other than AmeriCorps business.

### **Office Space, Equipment, and Supplies**

The placement site should create a space in which the member can effectively perform his or her assignment. Each member should be made aware of an area where coats and personal belongings can be stored during service hours.

Placement sites are responsible for furnishing any equipment and supplies necessary for the member to adequately perform tasks. Instruction on the use of office equipment should be covered, as deemed necessary, during the site orientation.

### **Site Orientation**

Members are expected to adhere to all site-related policies and procedures. The member should be introduced to these policies and procedures during a site orientation that needs to take place within the first 10 days after placement. CORE Susquehanna has provided a checklist of the minimum information that should be covered during the site orientation. The checklist needs to be signed and returned to the CORE office upon completion.

### **Site-Related Reimbursements**

CORE Susquehanna does not reimburse members for travel or other expenses related to placement sites. Policies and procedures for these reimbursements should be covered by the site supervisor during orientation.

### **Vandalism/Property Damage**

If a member is found to be vandalizing or willfully damaging property belonging to the placement site, CORE Susquehanna should be contacted immediately. The member will then be terminated from the site and CORE Susquehanna (see Involuntary Termination/Discharge.) The member may also be held accountable to the placement site for restitution of damages occurred.

### **Dos and Don'ts of AmeriCorps Service**

#### **DO**

- Develop a working relationship with the service site.
- Track achievements and volunteers for Accomplishment Reports.
- Cooperate with site supervisor and CORE staff to address challenges and report on progress.
- Attend all CORE convenings and service projects.
- Take Breaks and practice Self-Care
- Work continually toward the development and practice of leadership.
- Commit to fulfilling the mission of CORE Susquehanna with professionalism and integrity.
- Complete some limited grant writing as long as the grant proposal does not contribute to the service site match requirement, pay the organization's general operating expenses, or contribute to AmeriCorps funding or any other funding provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service or provided by any other federal agency.
- Be honest in fulfilling service hour contacts and about information regarding service.
- Be honest with AmeriCorps staff and site staff about all aspects of service.
- Become a positive role model at the site and in the surrounding community.
- Obtain an email address. Email is the most efficient method of communication.

## DON'T

- Fill in for an absent employee. By law, members may not, under any circumstances, perform services, duties, or activities that had been assigned to an employee or to an employee who recently resigned or has been discharged.
- Only do clerical or busy work; this may be a portion of the service, but not all of it.
- Count hours worked from home. If there are questions about an allowable activity, contact the CORE office.
- Do any activities such as lobbying, political, religious, or advocacy activities. These are prohibited (Please see Prohibited AmeriCorps Activities).
- Assist an organization with major fundraising efforts. CNCS policy does permit some limited activities related to fundraising by AmeriCorps members such as:
  - If it provides immediate and direct support to a specific and direct activity;
  - Falls within the program's approved direct service objectives;
  - is not the primary activity of the program;
  - is not for member match grant or general operating budget; and
  - is no more than 10% of total member hours
- Generate personal contact or relationships with clients of a partner site or service sites. Such contact is unprofessional and will not be tolerated.
- Contact fellow AmeriCorps members by email or telephone unless it is for AmeriCorps-related purposes.

## Attendance Policy

1. Full-time Corps members are expected to complete 1700 hours of service by the end of the program year. This is an average of 35-40 hours per week for 50 weeks.
2. Corps members' hours should follow a schedule agreed upon by both Corps members and site supervisors at the beginning of the year of service. **Members are both entitled and encouraged to take lunch break every day.**

3. When Corps members need to take off (i.e. vacation, court appearance, medical or dental appointments) during regularly scheduled service hours, this time needs to be discussed with and pre-approved by their site supervisor.
4. In the event of an unplanned leave of absence (i.e. illness or bereavement), members are required to follow the procedure in place at their site and notify the CORE Susquehanna office.
5. Any leave planned or unplanned, during scheduled service time, of three or more days, requires notification to the CORE Susquehanna office.
6. Corps members must complete their required hours by August 5, 2023.

If a member is more than 10% below the hours in her/his submitted Hours Plan, then his or her stipend will be suspended until the member's hours are brought up to within 10% of the total included in the Hours Plan.

#### **Disciplinary Action for Unauthorized Absences**

1. Talk with AmeriCorps Member Coordinator
2. Repeat offenses, talk with AmeriCorps Program Director
3. Continued offenses, see Member Agreement

#### **Training and Service Projects**

- Training and service projects are an integral part of the Corps experience. Therefore, it is required that members attend the scheduled CORE convenings and events.
- Hours at a partner/service site are not accepted on scheduled convening/project days.

Please be advised that not following this policy will be considered a breach of the AmeriCorps Member Agreement.

#### **Policy for Convenings and Service Projects**

##### **Attendance is mandatory at all convenings and service projects.**

- In the event that there is an illness or death, contact by email or phone must be made with AmeriCorps staff prior to the convening or service project to discuss the possibility of an excused absence and/or makeup hours.
- A member cannot count hours at their site during convening and service project days as they are not competing interests. Service hours and convenings/service projects are two components of the same program and work together in the AmeriCorps experience.

Attendance at convenings and service projects takes priority and should not compete with the service site.

- Repeated attendance issues will result in a required meeting with the member and AmeriCorps staff. The attendance issue shall be resolved or dismissal from AmeriCorps may be the result.

**All members must attend scheduled convenings as well as service projects. Please be advised that not following or abusing this policy will be considered a breach of a member's contract.**

## **Prohibited Activities Policy**

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytizing.
- h. Providing a direct benefit to:

- i. A business organized for profit;
  - ii. A labor union;
  - iii. A partisan political organization;
  - iv. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
  - v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- 
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
  - j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services;
  - k. **Census Activities.** AmeriCorps members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the Census, education about the importance of the Census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives. What members and volunteers do on their own time is up to them, consistent with program policies about outside employment and activities.
  - l. **Election and Polling Activities.** AmeriCorps member may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities; and
  - m. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing any of the above activities on their personal time.

## Resignation

### Voluntary Resignation

A member begins the program year with the understanding that they are making a year-long commitment. However, in the rare circumstance that a member needs to resign from the program, the following procedure should be followed:

1. A member must submit a notice of resignation, in writing, to the CORE Susquehanna Program Director. The member's notice must include official notification (e.g., doctor's note) justifying any compelling personal circumstance. A member who quits for other than a compelling personal reason, or does not adequately document the compelling circumstance, is not eligible for any portion of the education award.
2. Compelling personal reasons are decided on a case-by-case basis by CORE Susquehanna in conjunction with AmeriCorps regulations. Examples of circumstances that might be considered are serious illness/injury to the member or the death of an immediate member of the member's family.
3. Prior to resignation, the member must meet with a CORE Susquehanna staff person for an exit interview and must return all property to the placement site.

### Involuntary Resignation and/or Discharge

CORE Susquehanna has the authority to establish the provisions for which members may be prematurely released from their term of service due to cause.

The following are grounds for termination for cause from CORE Susquehanna:

- Conviction of a felony
- Stealing or causing to be stolen any CORE or placement site property
- Defacing or willfully damaging any CORE or placement site property
- Fighting, carrying weapons, or threatening physical violence
- Being verbally or physically abusive
- Refusing to follow staff instructions

- Breach of confidentiality
- Using controlled substances or illegal drugs
- Reporting to work under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Falsification of reports, timesheets, or personal information used to determine eligibility
- Chronic tardiness or absence
- Any other inappropriate or unprofessional behavior

See Member Agreement for complete information.

## **Reassignment**

CORE Susquehanna provides tools to assist the site and members in sharing important information which will lead to a successful year of service. It is expected that the relationship between CORE Susquehanna and the placement site will be for a full term of service. It is CORE's policy to not actually place a member at a site. CORE's philosophy is to allow a possible member to follow their interest and interview at a site or a number of sites. Both the site and member are encouraged to make a "good match".

CORE and its partners have a commitment to excellence, recognize and value the difference in contributions made by each member and site, and expect individual accountability for actions and performance.

The interviewing, matching, and continuous improvement processes are designed to provide the opportunity for success. On the rare occurrence that a new site assignment needs to be made (i.e. a site closes), the following guidelines have been established:

1. Before reassignment for either site or member will be considered, the CORE Grievance Procedure may be utilized with the active participation of CORE staff.
2. If it has been determined, after all parties have met and attempted a resolution, that the member can no longer provide service at the partner site, then the following may occur:

If it is deemed necessary to make a reassignment prior to the 12th week of service, efforts will be made to reassign a member who is in good standing with CORE; however, there is no guarantee that a member can or will be reassigned.

The reassignment process requires that the member interview with an available site and a match be made only through mutual agreement of the new site, the member, and CORE staff.

Reassignments occur only in unusual circumstances and in fairness to all parties involved. Reassignments cannot occur more than one time in a program year.

Good standing with CORE will be determined by performance, with the final decision resting with the CORE staff.

## **Conflict Management**

It is expected that normal communication and conflict resolution processes will resolve performance, attitude, attendance, and other personnel related issues. However, seemingly small unresolved issues can compound and become major problems. CORE Susquehanna has established the following conflict management process.

1. Define the Problem
  - One or two sentence definitions from all parties involved defining what they perceive the problem to be about
2. Collect Facts and Opinions
  - What is the situation?
  - What happened?
  - Who is involved?
  - What policies and procedures are involved?
3. Consider All Solutions
  - Brainstorm solutions; rule out criticisms
4. Define Results Expected
  - What should happen in resolving this conflict?
  - What goals should be set?
5. Select Solution(s)
  - Which solution(s) will yield desired results?
6. Implement Solution(s)
  - Establish specific timetables and goals for implementation; determine evaluation techniques.

The overall goal of conflict resolution is to reach a mutually satisfactory solution that maintains good human relations.

## Time Sheets

In order to be eligible for the education award, members must fulfill all program requirements and complete a satisfactory year of service which requires a minimum of 1700 hours of service for full-time members, 900 hours for part-time members, and 450 hours for summer members. Training time, as well as direct service, is considered part of the required hours.

Members and placement sites are responsible for making sure the member can serve enough hours to complete a term of service on time. If a site is closed or operating on a reduced schedule, the member may, with approval from the site supervisor, contact the CORE Susquehanna staff for information about additional opportunities for collecting hours.

### Time Sheet Guidelines

- CORE Susquehanna members complete and submit timesheets to site supervisors every two weeks via <http://pa.oncorpsreports.com/>.
- Time sheets should be submitted the same week that the living stipend is received.
- Living stipend checks will be held if time sheets are not submitted every 2 weeks.
- Record direct service hours only. Do not include travel time to and from the service site.
- Each day, document daily activities/tasks. Be sure to use action words such as planned, coordinated, arranged, scheduled, organized, prepared, conducted, or developed.
- Members must account for any non-service hours (i.e. lunch).
- Time sheets are submitted every two weeks to the site supervisor and Karen Reber for approval.
- Members need to document time in hourly increments of 15 minutes:

15 minutes	.25 hours
30 minutes	.50 hours
45 minutes	.75 hours

For example:

6 hours and 15 minutes	6.25 hours
6 hours and 30 minutes	6.50 hours
6 hours and 45 minutes	6.75 hours

- Hours served at your site should be documented under the service hours column. If your site provides training, some of your hours may go into the training column as well. Please keep in mind that your training hours may not exceed 20% of your total hours. This means that you cannot count more than 340 hours total in the training column. If you have any questions or concerns about this issue, contact Lacy or Dennis immediately.
- The service column may include some hours performed in the community at another non-profit site. Your site supervisor needs to approve any hours that you serve that are not at your placement site. Members must get permission from their site supervisor and the CORE Susquehanna Office before the hours are served. Also, an off-site verification form must be completed, signed, and returned to Lacy at the CORE Susquehanna Office.
- Meetings with your small group service team that take place outside of convening days are considered service hours.
- Fundraising hours cannot be more than 10% of your total hours. A member does not need to do any hours in this category; however, if hours are served in the fundraising column, no more than 170 hours are allowed.
- Members will not be allowed to collect hours for participating in prohibited activities. If you have any questions about what constitutes a prohibited activity, see page 16 and/or contact the CORE Susquehanna office.

## Living Stipend Schedule

<b>Date Time Sheet Submitted</b>	<b>Date Check Sent</b>
8/22/22	8/23/22
8/16/22	9/06/22
8/30/22	9/20/22
9/13/22	10/04/22
9/27/22	10/18/22
10/11/22	11/01/22
10/25/22	11/15/22
11/08/22	11/29/22
11/22/22	12/13/22
12/06/22	12/27/22
12/20/22	01/10/23
1/03/23	01/24/23
1/17/23	2/07/23
1/31/23	02/21/23
2/14/23	03/07/23
2/28/23	03/21/23
3/14/23	04/04/23
3/28/23	04/18/23
04/11/23	05/02/23
04/25/23	05/16/23
05/09/23	05/30/23
05/23/23	06/13/23
06/06/23	06/27/23
06/20/23	07/11/23
07/04/23	07/25/23

7/18/23	08/08/23
08/01/23	08/22/23
08/15/23	09/05/23

## Closings

The CORE Susquehanna office will be closed on the following holidays:

LABOR DAY	Monday September 5, 2022
COLUMBUS DAY	Monday, October 10, 2022
VETERANS DAY	Friday, November 11, 2022
THANKSGIVING DAY	Thursday, November 24, 2022
THANKSGIVING	Friday, November 25, 2022
CHRISTMAS	Friday, December 23, 2022
CHRISTMAS	Monday, December 26, 2022
NEW YEAR'S DAY	Monday, January 2, 2023
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	Monday, January 16, 2023
PRESIDENTS' DAY	Monday, February 20, 2023
GOOD FRIDAY	Friday, April 07, 2023
MEMORIAL DAY	Monday, May 29, 2023
INDEPENDENCE DAY	Monday, July 4, 2023

## Continuous Improvement

### Site Visits

#### Site Visits

Site visits to all CORE Susquehanna placements will be made by CORE staff during the program year to monitor and support both the member and the site to provide continuous improvement. Site visits are a way of exchanging information, ensuring compliance, and providing guidance.

During site visits, CORE staff will meet separately with both the member and site supervisor to discuss placement and program expectations. If at any time a member or supervisor feels the need to request an additional site visit, a visit can be arranged by contacting CORE staff.

#### Site Supervisor Meetings

CORE staff will schedule two meetings at the Snyder East Community Services Building throughout the program year for all site supervisors. The purpose of the meetings is to inform site supervisors about policies, procedures, and ongoing events and offer an opportunity for feedback. This information will also be discussed at scheduled site visits. CORE staff is available by phone and by email.

#### Evaluations

Twice during the year, site supervisors are asked to evaluate their member(s) and comment on the CORE Susquehanna AmeriCorps program. These evaluations are distributed at the midpoint and end of the year. During site visits with CORE staff and at the end of the program year, members have the opportunity to provide feedback about the site, CORE Susquehanna, and the AmeriCorps program. These opportunities provide CORE Susquehanna with written feedback that enables staff and program participants to work more effectively toward program objectives.

#### Grievances

A **grievance** is defined as:

1. A concern or conflict with other persons in CORE Susquehanna services/service provision, and/or
2. Dissatisfaction with supervisory/administrative procedures, policies, and/or disciplinary action.

#### Just Cause

To ensure fair and equitable treatment for all members, decisions made at any level of this grievance procedure shall be based on the principle of **Just Cause**. The cornerstone of this procedure includes asking:

1. Did the member have foreknowledge of the consequences of his/her actions?
2. Was the member treated fairly and without prejudice?
3. Did the supervisor attempt to correct the member's conduct before resorting to disciplinary action?
4. Did the supervisor, in investigating the grievance, conduct a fair and objective investigation?
5. Was the discipline given or action taken warranted?
6. Was the employee's past work record taken into consideration?
7. Was the action taken in accord with the agency's best practices?
8. Was the action taken against the employee proportionate to the gravity of the violation?

In the event of a grievance by an AmeriCorps member, participant, labor organization, or other interested individual concerning a program run through CORE Susquehanna or a member of AmeriCorps associated with CORE Susquehanna, the organization will make every effort to facilitate an informal resolution among the involved parties.

### **Special Note**

If a grievance is filed regarding a proposed placement of a participant in a program, such placement must not be made unless the placement is consistent with the resolution of the grievance.

### **For an Informal Resolution**

The process will be aided by a neutral party who may not compel a resolution. Any decision by the neutral party is advisory and is not binding unless both parties agree.

The aggrieved party may seek resolution through alternative means of dispute resolution such as mediation or facilitation.

At the initial session of dispute resolution proceedings, parties are advised in writing of the right to file a formal grievance and the right to arbitration.

If the matter is resolved: the terms of the resolution are recorded in a written agreement, and the parties agree to forgo filing any further grievances on the matter under consideration. \*Except for the written agreement, the proceeds are confidential.

If the matter is not resolved within 30 calendar days from the date of the informal dispute resolution process: The aggrieved party is informed of their right to file a formal grievance for the 2nd time.

If these informal efforts to resolve disputes are unsuccessful AmeriCorps members, may seek resolution through the formal grievance procedure as outlined in the Member Agreement that is reviewed and signed on the first day of CORE orientation.

## **In a Formal Grievance Resolution**

- The neutral party from the non-formal process is not involved in the formal complaint process AND
- Communications or proceedings of the informal dispute resolution process are not referred to or introduced into evidence at the grievance and/or arbitration hearing.

A **formal grievance** must be filed in the following manner:

- Prepare an appeal letter to the Union-Snyder Community Action Agency's Executive Director, which includes the following information:

- o Today's date
- o Your name
- o Your address
- o Phone number where you can be reached during daytime hours
- o The decision and the reason you disagree with the decision

- Your appeal letter must be sent within 10 days of the adverse action to:

Executive Director  
Union-Snyder Community Action Agency  
713 Bridge Street, Suite 10  
Selinsgrove, PA 17870

## **Timelines**

Grievances cannot be reviewed if they are made more than 1 year after the alleged occurrence except for fraud and criminal activity.

- A hearing will be conducted no later than 30 days after filing. The appeal will be reviewed by an appeal committee consisting of the Executive Director, AmeriCorps Director, and Operations Director. Any appeal committee member directly involved in the grievance will be excused and replaced by an uninvolved staff member designated by the Executive Director. A decision shall be rendered within 30 days. The grievant will receive the decision in writing.
- A decision will be made no later than 60 days after the filing.

## **Binding Mediation or Arbitration**

The grievant can request binding arbitration or mediation if the decision is adverse to the grievant, or if no decision is reached within 60 calendar days. A binding mediation or arbitration hearing will be held within 45 days after the request or within 30 days after a mediator/arbitrator is appointed. Within 30 days of the binding mediation or arbitration hearing, a decision will be rendered.

1. A qualified mediator/arbitrator is used who is jointly selected and independent of the interested parties.
2. The Union-Snyder Community Action Agency's Executive Director appoints a mediator or arbitrator if the parties cannot agree on one within 15 days.
3. Mediation or arbitration is held no later than 45 calendar days after the request – or 30 days after the mediator/arbitrator is appointed by the Executive Director.
4. A decision is made by the arbitrator no later than 30 days after the arbitration commences.
5. The cost of arbitration is divided evenly between the parties to the arbitration.

## **Special Note**

If the participant, labor organization, or other interested party prevails during arbitration, then the grantee pays the total cost of the proceedings and the attorney's fees of the prevailing party.

Effect of noncompliance with arbitration- A suit to enforce arbitration awards may be brought in any Federal district court having jurisdiction over the parties without regard to the amount in controversy or the parties' citizenship.

## **Remedies**

Remedies for a grievance filed under the established procedures may include but are not limited to

- Prohibition of a placement of a participant.
- Reinstatement of the employee to the position he or she held prior to the displacement.

- Payment of lost wages and benefits.
- Re-establishment of other relevant terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.
- Suspension or termination of assistance. CORE Susquehanna may suspend or terminate payments for assistance under this chapter.
- Any other equitable relief that is necessary to correct any violation of the nonduplication or non-displacement requirements or to make the displaced employee whole.

## Travel

### Reimbursement

- Members are not reimbursed by their placement site or by CORE Susquehanna for any travel expenses incurred while going to or from home and their site.
- Members may be eligible for some form of mileage reimbursement from their placement site if the member is required to leave their site to attend a meeting or training arranged by their placement site.
- Members need to contact their site supervisor to discuss travel and reimbursement and the process of submitting the mileage expense.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Are AmeriCorps members employees?

No. Members are not employees; you are a participant in National Service Organization. Members provide a Term of Service for one year. Think of it as a training time, a time to explore and discover if you are on the right track with what you want to be doing in the future. You are not working, you are serving.

### 2. Can members qualify for unemployment if they leave the program?

No. Members are not employees, so they do not qualify for unemployment compensation at the end of their term of service.

### 3. Do members receive health benefits?

Yes. Health benefits are through Cigna and The Corps Network Health Insurance Plan.

### 4. Are there childcare options?

Yes, Gap Solutions is the AmeriCorps Child Care Plan found at:

- <https://www.americorpschildcare.com/>
- Or by calling 1-855-886-0687.

**5. What happens if service hours are completed early? Is the member done?**

If a member completes their hours before the program year ends, the living stipend ends. However, members may serve beyond 1700 hours and, as long as they continue to serve at their site, they will continue to receive the living stipend until the end of the program year. If a member serves beyond 1700 hours, they may qualify for a Presidential Service Award. View details at: <http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/>.

**6. Can a member serve places other than his/her site?**

Yes. Hours served away from the member's host site must always have approval from the site supervisor prior to serving the hours, and the member must fill out an off-site verification form. The form should be turned into the CORE office within the time period served.

**7. When do members get paid?**

Stipend checks are mailed every two weeks. Members are not permitted to pick up a stipend check unless they have an unusual circumstance. The CORE office needs to be notified several days prior to the check mail date.

**8. Are members permitted to miss convenings or group service projects because of service site commitments?**

No. Convenings and group projects take priority over your site. The site must be able to function without the AmeriCorps member. Site supervisors have the convening schedule as do members. Please plan accordingly.

Some useful websites for reference:

- [www.coreamericorps.org](http://www.coreamericorps.org)
- [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)
- [www.americorpsalums.org](http://www.americorpsalums.org)
- <http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/>