**CalSERVES AmeriCorps VIP**

**Suggested 2-Hour VIP Partner Site Staff Training**

* **Welcome- Introductions**
* **Purpose of Training:** 
  + **Give an overview of talking points**
* **Main goals: 5-10 minutes**
  + Purpose of AmeriCorps
  + Why does VIP exist and where does it fit within AmeriCorps?
  + To provide staff with tools to manage your VIP fellows correctly and effectively.
  + Clarify rules/regulations
  + Explain paperwork process
* **Inclusion: How much do you know about AmeriCorps and what kind of impact does it have in communities? 5 minutes**
* **What is AmeriCorps? 25 minutes**
  + A national service program that engages thousands of Americans in a domestic Peace Corps, getting things done for America.
  + Founded in 1994 by Bill Clinton
  + **Three areas of AmeriCorps**
    - NCCC, State and National, VISTA
  + **AmeriCorps members/ programs serve in the following areas:** education, public safety, environmental, housing, health care.
  + AmeriCorps members work in the most underserved communities.
    - Addressing illiteracy, neighborhood safety, homelessness, and health care, members bring communities together to solve these problems.
  + **AmeriCorps Requirements:**
    - Complete (minimum) 1,700 hours during service term (ranges from 10-12 months – expect members to complete full term of member contract; many members will go above and beyond 1,700 hours)
    - Participate in at least 3 National Days of Service.
  + **Member Code of Conduct:** 
    - * **Members will:**
        + Attend required training events in the service term (from CalSERVES and Supervising Organization).
        + Follow directions from supervisors and adequately perform assigned service duties (if not: see our member management guidelines on how to address a given situation).
        + Develop and maintain positive relationships with service staff
        + Demonstrate mutual respect towards others
        + Dress appropriately
      * **Members will not:**
        + Take part in illegal activities
        + Pose significant risk to self or others
        + Have contact with minor service recipients outside the parameters of the program
        + Transport passengers in their own private vehicle during the hours they are serving as an AC member, unless the passenger is an employee of the program
        + Have consecutive unexcused absences or tardiness that exceed 3 days (without a doctor’s note), including failure to notify a supervisor when unable to report for community service activities
        + Engage in abusive language, fighting, insubordination, lying
        + Engage in inappropriate behavior
        + Harass service staff, fellow members, AmeriCorps personnel, or other agency clients
        + Breach confidentiality
        + Engage in theft
      * **Prohibited Activities (note to partner sites that members cannot be assigned to do these things):**
        + Attempting to influence legislation;
        + Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
        + Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
        + Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
        + Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
        + 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;
        + 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 proselytization;
        + Providing a direct benefit to—A business organized for profit; A labor union; A partisan political organization; 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 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; and
        + 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-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

**Suggested Activity:** True or false game of assignments members can/cannot participate in, based on prohibited activities.

* + **AmeriCorps Member Benefits:**
    - In exchange for service, members receive the following:
      * The Segal Education Award: $5,550.00—applies toward student loans or further educational opportunities
      * Loan Forbearance (for government-backed student loans while serving)
      * Regularly scheduled living stipend *(provide payment schedule to partners if available)*
      * Health Care Benefits
      * Child Care Benefits (if eligible)
  + **National Days of Service:**
    - Designated days in which Americans across the country are encouraged to take part in community service projects. In every region of the U.S. people come together to beautify, clean, renew, invigorate, and restore our country.
    - Members required to attend at least 3 *(or insert your Supervising Organization’s requirement on National Days of Service here)*
* **How does VIP fit into AmeriCorps? 5 minutes**
  + VIPs Fellows (ie, VIPs) are AmeriCorps members and serve under the same stipulations as other AmeriCorps members.
  + **Brief History:**
    - Formed in 2009, the Volunteer Infrastructure Project was created in response to the economic downturn. The project’s mission is to increase the capacity of these organizations by recruiting and utilizing volunteers who will provide additional support to partner sites.
  + **Goal of VIP:** 
    - Short answer: Enable your organization to recruit, train, retain, and utilize volunteers this year and into the future.
    - Volunteers will add additional support to neighborhoods and organizations that need it the most – your organization has been selected because you do what you well, so we know you can serve the community better with a stronger volunteer program.
    - SUSTAINABILITY! VIPs are working directly with their community to generate/boost volunteerism so that after their term, a community support system is in place.
* **VIP Performance Measures: 10-15 minutes**
  + Why do we measure performance?
    - To ensure that Partner Sites are benefitting from VIP program.
    - To ensure sustainability. Are the systems working to attract and retain volunteers?
    - To document improvement
    - They are a funding requirement
  + **Numbers/Goals:**
    - 60 long-term volunteers (8 hours per volunteer)
    - 60 short-term volunteers (2 hours per volunteer)
      * Volunteers will serve 336,000 high-need recipients around the state
      * VIPs increase capacity of partner sites: 80% of organizations will exhibit 20% improvement. We want to see our partner site grow!
    - **Volunteer Hours:**
      * VIPs track each volunteer’s hours. They report to Supervising Organizations in the VIP Monthly Report. You will help the VIP Fellow fill out this form (will cover later in training).
  + **AmeriCorps member hours: 15 minutes**
    - To ensure that members spend their time working towards the goals of VIP, there are restrictions on the ways that they spend their time. Members are required to spend their time in the following areas:
    - Capacity building (60%):
      * Activities that expand, improve, or strengthen your volunteer program.
        + Develop and implement a volunteer program, including the development of position descriptions, assessments, and training programs.
        + Recruit community members as volunteers for programs that support children, youth, and families.
        + Develop a system to support and recognize volunteers at the Partner Site.
        + Under the direction of the Partner Site supervisor, track volunteer program and infrastructure development at the Site throughout the year.
        + Communicate with supervisors, administration, and program staff on an ongoing basis to meet the needs of the program.
        + Conduct other infrastructure development activities as identified in the Partner Site assessment.
    - **Direct Service (25%):**
      * Work side-by-side with volunteers to provide guidance, better understand clients’ needs, and to improve volunteer experience.
    - **Member Development (15%):**
      * Activities that improve/develop YOUR professional skills.
      * Must accumulate **EXACTLY 255 hours**, including **36 hours of online training.**
        + Online trainings will vary and are organized by Local VIP Leader
        + Member Development will include the annual CalSERVES conference.

October 22-25. Santa Rosa, CA

Members will spend three days of workshops designed to develop their professional skills.

* + - * + All trainings offered by CalSERVES or the Supervising Organization are MANDATORY

**Matching Game:** Write different allowable member activities on index cards. Pass them out, and have the participants match the activities with the type of service hours. Discuss questions. **5 minutes**

* **What CAN’T VIPs Do?: 5 minutes**
  + Prohibited activities (discussed earlier)
  + FUNDRAISE
    - VIPs can recruit volunteers to fundraise, but they cannot participate in fundraising activities themselves.
  + Tasks that aren’t relevant to the VIP goals
    - VIPs are not general employees of your organization
    - VIPs there to build a volunteer program
  + You may not keep them from attending CalSERVES training. Trainings through CalSERVES/Supervising Organizations are MANDATORY.
    - Advanced notice is always provided
    - *Trainer: provide supervisors with your yearly training calendar.*
* **VIP Structure: 15-20 minutes**
  + VIP is the largest capacity-building AmeriCorps State program in the country.
    - Managed by CalSERVES
  + **CalSERVES:**
    - Manages program goals
    - Assists members
    - Provides resources
    - Organizes statewide trainings
    - Reports on the impact of VIP
  + **Supervising Organizations:**
    - Oversees VIP on a local level, supervising local VIP Fellows
    - Coordinates, coaches, and trains localized teams of VIP Fellows
    - Organizes AmeriCorps member recruitment
    - Reports impact to CalSERVES
    - Works with partner sites, assisting to manage members and complete required paperwork
  + **Partner Sites:**
    - Provide meaningful service opportunity to VIP Fellows, giving the ability to build volunteer infrastructure
    - Fill out required paperwork for program
    - Help ensure that the VIP Fellow has a positive AmeriCorps experience and completes the term of service successfully
    - **Review of MOU agreements –** Review all aspects. Remember that the supervisor may not have seen this before – someone else in the organization may have signed the MOU. Be especially sure to cover:
      * Supervisory role with member
        + Contact Supervising Organization immediately if any issues arrive, including tardiness, missing service, or performance issues.
        + Refer to member management guidelines (walk through some of the guidelines with participants).
      * Cash match
        + Review your payment requirements/expectations (how often do they pay? Where do they send checks to? Even if the people in the training are not handling the finances, it is nice for them to know at least an overview)
      * In-Kind Match
        + Review amount requirement. Reinforce importance of turning in PARs to record this.
        + All employees providing in-kind match must be background checked for the program. This is an AmeriCorps requirement.
      * Partners share the responsibility of helping the member successfully complete term of service.
        + Organizations may not hire the member before the term of service is completed.
        + Should work with members if challenges arise; it is our goal to retain all members and allow them to fully complete the service term (both the number of hours and the dates of service).

**VIP Fellow Management/Supervision: 10 minutes**

* *Review Member Management Guidelines document*
* *Outline your expectations for the VIP Fellows on the team*
* *Encourage open communication between SO, Partner Site, and member about the member’s performance and the partner site’s needs*

**VIP Reporting: Remaining time**

* **Provide opportunities to fill out paperwork**
  + All reports are processed by CalSERVES—everything is reported to funders
  + Supervising organizations will ask for reports prior to deadlines
  + Required Forms:
    - **Personal Activity Reports (PARs):**
      * Due on a monthly basis
      * Tracks the dollar value of the supervision time spent by your staff.
      * PARs record the amount of in-kind matching funds that your organization agreed to provide in the MOU
      * *Have the participants practice filling out this form. Walk them through the PAR Instructional Form. Answer any questions.*
    - **Volunteer Capacity Assessments (VCAs)**
      * Track the increase of volunteer capacity (Goal: Increase of 20%)
      * Filled out by Partner Site staff, Supervising Organization staff, or VIP Leaders.
      * Preliminary, mid-year, final must be completed by same person—Be objective!
      * VCAs are NOT a reflection of the VIPs quality of work
        + Certain areas will grow naturally and with the VIPs assistance, others will take more time. Be honest with where your program is
      * VIPs can have input with VCAs but will not fill them out themselves
        + Should come from an outsider’s perspective
      * Expect first round to show your need for growth (the whole reason you are a part of VIP in the first place), and often will be 0s, 1s, and 2s.
      * *Show VCAs to supervisors. Make sure they understand all of the categories. Answer questions.*
    - **Member Performance Evaluations:**
      * Evaluate members 3 times a year
      * In place to strengthen members/program
      * Purpose: to show member growth throughout the year
        + Members will not be at a 5 in the beginning of the year. Most begin at 3s or below – like the VCAs, to show the potential for growth in the member.
        + We expect that 80% of members will show a 20% increase over the year.
        + Take this seriously; it’s a disservice to your VIP to offer no constructive feedback.
      * Meet one-on-one with VIP Fellow around these evaluations to provide feedback, answer questions, gain clarity. Work towards goals and improvement.
    - **Volunteer Reports:**
      * VIPs submit monthly reports to the Supervising Organization to track capacity increase.
      * Submitted to CalSERVES on a monthly basis
      * Tracks:
        + Number of new volunteers
        + Number of volunteer hours served
        + Number of new clients served by volunteers
        + Volunteer capacity areas that have improved
        + Volunteer capacity areas that need more attention
        + Great stories from the volunteer program
    - **Member Service Logs/ Time Sheets**
      * VIPs fill these out each day, and split their time into each of the 3 categories of service:
        + Capacity Building
        + Member Development
        + Direct Service
      * You should verify their hours served and sign the log at the end of the month. Check the form for accuracy before signing.
      * This form cannot be signed before the last hours of the month are served.
      * Return the form to the Supervising Organization, who will return the sheet to CalSERVES.