



Dear Member,

Welcome to the SENCorps/AmeriCorps National Direct and Recovery Project! My name is Tammy Hopper and I am the Director of Organizational Advancement of SENetwork . I would like to personally thank you for joining us on this great adventure. It is my wish that you fully enjoy your AmeriCorps experience to the fullest potential.

The SENCorps/AmeriCorps Project is a partnership between your project site, SENetwork, and AmeriCorps. This folder contains a member handbook which is designed to briefly orient you to the project, and will be used as a companion piece to ongoing training and support resources that are available to you. Your project support for your onsite activities. SENetwork will provide training and support for your onsite activities. SENetwork will provide training and support through the blog site www.senamericorps.blogspot.com, your AmeriCorps coach, and the regional conference. AmeriCorps provides resources through its website www.americorps.gov.

The following is a chart detailing the SENetwork employee contacts:

Tammy Hopper Director of Organizational Advancement	Tammy will help you with any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of your AmeriCorps experience.	Thopper@senetwork.org (865)521-7131
Heather Webb Accounting Specialist	Heather will help you with any administrative questions	hwebbl@senetwork.org (239)949-4414
Jesse Jordan AmeriCorps Coach/ Training Specialist	Jesse will be training you on safe exits and will help you with any questions regarding member expectations, or clarification of an on the job aspects.	Jessewjordan@hotmail.com

You will be receiving a SENCorps/AmeriCorps welcome call very soon, from Jesse. Please contact us with any questions you might have. I thank you for your sincere dedication to this project and wish you success.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hopper

What is SENetwork?

SENetwork is a member driven organization of youth and family serving agencies concentrated in the Southeastern United States (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN).

We believe that young people, families, and communities develop in relation to one another. Since 1977, SENetwork has offered a meeting ground for staff and youth of youth serving agencies. Here, members share experiences, expand skills, test new ideas and strategies and create new models of working.

SENetwork provides training, technical assistance, advocacy support and information sharing to youth serving agencies in the southeast. We provide services tailored to meet specific agency needs in the most cost efficient manner. We bring these services to members through individual site visits, conference events, distance learning technology, and daily availability of our staff. Many of our training and information services are now available through the website via on demand webinars, electronic library, and electronic alerts. The mission of SENetwork is to strengthen organizations as they strengthen youth, families and communities.

Program Objectives

- To enable project sites to recruit, train, and supervises a full time, part time, quarter time and minimum AmeriCorps members.

Project sites have designated a Project Site Manager (PSM) to liaison with the SENetwork AmeriCorps Program Manager (Tammy Hopper). Tammy provides oversight to all project site activities, and ensures that all project site activities are carried out.

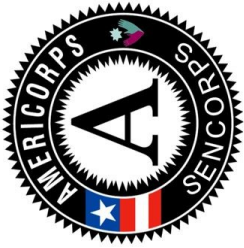
- To orient PSM's to AmeriCorps and the SENetwork AmeriCorps Project regulations, responsibilities and resources.
- The PSM's need to be trained in recruitment, screening, training and supervision of AmeriCorps members. PSM's must also be oriented to AmeriCorps guidelines, recruitment, screening, training and supervision protocol.
- To provide the AmeriCorps member with onsite orientations. These orientation are to include project sites policies and procedures, confidentiality, boundaries, supervision responsibilities for work with youth, service schedule, documentation practices, and ongoing training schedules. Each member is to be assigned an experienced youth care professional to shadow during their first month of service and as a work partner thereafter.
- To provide ongoing support, training, and supervision to the PSM's by facilitating monthly networking calls, monthly individual supervision calls and onsite supervision and support visits for each project site.
- To facilitate regional cluster trainings on topics determined by the PSM's in consultation with the President/CEO and Program Manager.
- To facilitate monthly webinars (computer/web-based trainings) on various topics.

Program Objectives

- To encourage participation in the online blog (www.senamericorps.blogspot.com) for members to engage in reflection and service learning regarding their experiences.
- To enable project sites to develop or refine infrastructure for sustained community involvement.

Project sites are interviewed to determine their current capacity of volunteer programs. We want to move them to the next stage of development by helping them formalize procedure and community contact for volunteer programs.

- To ensure SENCorps project meets or exceeds outputs and outcomes, and meets all grant management requirements.
- To train PSM's in project documentation and reporting responsibilities.
- To collect and compile project data on a monthly basis and then develop improvement strategies as needed in consultation with PSM's, Program Manager, President/CEO and Board of Directors.
- To develop resource acquisition initiative to provide sustain resources to the SENCorps project.
- Engage PSM, Project Manager, President/CEO, Board of Directors, and Executive Advisory committee in designing resource acquisitions initiative.
- Determine site based tasks and supports needed to initiate tasks.
- Coordinate feedback regarding success of initiative and development improvement strategies as needed.



How do I ... ?

First Step

Don't hesitate to ask your PSM at the agency for help with any issue, questions or ideas you may have.

Remember these resources -

Your Handbook

www.senetnetwork.org

<http://senamericorps.blogspot.com/>

[http://](http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/)

www.nationalservicerresources.org/category/groups/americorps-national

Other SENCorps members

Help on the Way!

For questions about the blog, training or service that you would just like to talk over with a former member who is now part of the SENCorps team - Call or e-mail Jesse. Your PSM may even suggest and encourage you to use this resource. Sometimes Jesse will ask for some help...

Next Step

Your PSM or Jesse will contact the SEN Project Director if additional information or resources are needed to address your question, concern or idea.

After That...
Your PSM will get back with you to address the question, issue or idea.

and then what happens?
Tammy will work with you, the PSM, the SEN Executive Director and, if necessary, the CNCS to provide the best response as soon as possible.

Then you should -
Check your handbook for information regarding the issue -
Make sure you've made reasonable attempts at connection and then...
Contact the SEN Corps Project Director, Tammy at thopper@senetwork.org who is willing to listen and help.

What if ...

Your PSM or Jesse isn't available; doesn't respond after sufficient time; or, provides information or direction that seems to be inaccurate or a conflict with your expectations?

SENCorps/AmeriCorps Member Orientation

Frequently asked Questions (FAQs)

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is an opportunity to make a big difference in your life and in the lives of those around you. It's a change to apply your skills and ideals toward helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.

Each year, AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for adults of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups. It is a program run by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service which provides grants to states and national organizations to disseminate this program. SENCorps is the recipient of one of the National Direct Grants.

The purpose of AmeriCorps National is to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building to address unmet community needs. Local programs design service activities for members serving full or part time for one year or during the summer. AmeriCorps members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve. The participating organizations are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs.

What is SENetwork?

The SENetwork provides training, technical assistance and advocacy support to organizations serving youth and families. Founded in 1977, SENetwork is a private, not-for-profit, member driven organization with over eighty member programs.

We are committed to strengthening organizations through on-site trainings, regional conferences, and the SEN Virtual Campus-where you can find on-demand trainings resources and a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to respond to the every-changing needs of youth and families today. SENetwork services enable organizations to maximize their professional development resources, thereby supporting their essential workforce.

SENetwork also provides sub-grants to organizational members as a part of pilot, demonstration, and dissemination projects. SENetwork is an AmeriCorps National Direct and Recovery grantee and as such provides sub-grants to 18-20 organizational members as a part of this dissemination project. Organizational member agencies engaged in a competitive process in order to secure a position in the SENCorps Safe Exits Project.

To whom do I belong, AmeriCorps, SENetwork or the agency?

All of the above. As a part of this project, you are an AmeriCorps member, performing your service at the agency, as a part of the SENCorps Sage Exit project. This means that you will receive support from and have responsibilities to all three entities. The agency is the primary authority, and you are required to follow all policies and procedures required of staff and volunteers of the agency. You will receive from the agency training and regular support needed to perform the day to day activities of the project. If you are a full time member. You will

Also receive your living allowance through the agency, although it is funded through the agency, AmeriCorps and SENetwork. The requirements in terms of hours, locations of service, duration of service, types of service allowed, reporting, eligibility, etc. are defined by SENetwork based on the AmeriCorps requirements. By accepting an AmeriCorps position and signing the AmeriCorps member contract, you are agreeing to abide the policies and procedures of the agency as well as those of AmeriCorps and SENetwork as specified in the contract.

What are my benefits as an AmeriCorps member?

AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, student-loan forbearance, health coverage, and childcare for those who qualify. After successfully completing their term of service, they receive an AmeriCorps Education Award. This award can be used to pay off qualified student loans or to finance college, graduate school, or vocational training at eligible institutions. In addition to these benefits, AmeriCorps members learn new skills, acquire qualities of leadership, and gain a sense of satisfaction for taking on responsibilities that directly affect peoples' lives.

How do I access these benefits?

As a full time AmeriCorps Member, you will receive a monthly installment of your living allowance as well as health insurance coverage from your agency. In addition, you will have assistance from an assigned AmeriCorps/SENCorps Coach (SENetwork staff person) who will help supply you with the information to access the other AmeriCorps benefits. AmeriCorps has an extensive website which you view at www.americorps.gov.

What are my benefits as a part of the SENCorps Safe Exit Project?

In addition to the AmeriCorps Member benefits, you will receive:

- Individual membership to SENetwork for duration of service
- Onsite training specific to youth care work, outreach work and/or volunteer outreach and support
- Onsite, distance learning, and regional training regarding safe exit strategies
- Access to select AmeriCorps member blog site
- Onsite, distance learning, and regional training regarding certification courses in the field of youth work proactive
- Ongoing support from AmeriCorps Member Coach
- Access to job research and referral for youth and family services programs throughout the southeast
- Select AmeriCorps Member gear

What do I do if I have a question or concern about my AmeriCorps experience?

It is important to let someone know as soon as you have questions or concerns about you work and/or AmeriCorps experience. First, let you Project Site Manager (supervisor at your agency) know your concerns, and give them an opportunity to help you. If you need additional help and support, contact your AmeriCorps Coach as soon as possible. It is our goal to make this a successful experience for you, for the young people you are serving, and the agency that is your host site. If we don't know about the problem, we cant help. So, let us know!! We promise to listen, to proceed carefully, and to keep you safely involved in ever step. Also, Please review

your Member contract thoroughly. There is a Grievance Procedure spelled out in the contract which is based on the guidelines put forth by AmeriCorps. This is a framework that will ultimately drive the process should we need to implement a formal procedure.

What is a Safe Exit Project, and what is my role in it?

SENetwork member agencies annually provide services to over 75,000 of the most vulnerable young people in their communities. These youth come to the agencies because of many crisis issues including but not limited to homelessness, runaway, abuse, suicide threat, violence, school failure, delinquency, and substance abuse. The first goal of service is to resolve crisis and safety issues, and to provide youth and families the support needed to keep their family intact, and to succeed in daily life. If this is not a safe option, programs then work to secure long-term housing and support options that the youth need to succeed. The ultimate goal is for youth to leave programs and engage in next steps that are safe, appropriate to their needs, and that help them develop positively.

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the federal Department of Health and Human Services funds all of the SENCorps participating agencies to provide Basic Center Programs, (BCP), Transitional Living Programs (TLP), and/or Street Outreach Programs (SOP), which are programs that work with runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth. FYSB has identified safe exits as a critical indicator of positive youth outcomes, and has established a goal for all BCP's to have a 95% safe exit rate within the next five years (Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Programs Announcement, 2006). For BCP's a safe exit is one in which a youth leaves to some place OTHER THAN the street or place unknown. FYSB suggests that one proactive that leads to high safe exits rates is for each youth to have one-to-one time with a skilled caring adult who will develop safe exit plans with them. SENetwork has developed this SENCorps Project proposal in response to these needs.

MEMBERS ROLES: AmeriCorps members will work/serve side by side with other youth care professionals in order to provide: supervision of daily activities, one-on-one support, facilitation of safe exit planning, and life skills instruction to youth participating in the program. In addition, members will work together with program staff to extend outreach and support to other community volunteers. These two efforts will increase the number of caring adults available to interact with youth in crisis regarding the development of safe exit plans, thereby increasing the likelihood of youth exiting programs to safe and appropriate next steps. AmeriCorps members will take a leadership role in assuring that all youth engage in meaningful and ongoing safe exit planning throughout their experience with the program. They will provide training and support to community volunteers once they are themselves fully oriented to the program.

SENCorps Safe Exit Project Grant Excerpt

SENetwork member agencies annually provide services to over 75,000 of the most vulnerable young people in their communities. These youth come to the agencies because of many crisis issues including but not limited to homelessness, runaway, abuse, suicide threat, violence, school failure, delinquency, and substance abuse. The first goal of services is to resolve crisis and safety issues, and to provide youth and families the support needed to keep their family intact, and to succeed in daily life. If this is not a safe option, programs then work to secure long-term housing and support options that the youth need to succeed. The ultimate goal is for youth to leave programs and engage in next steps that are safe, appropriate to their needs, and that help them develop positively.

In March 2003, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report on the challenges confronting the child welfare workforce, a workforce similar to that of the SENetwork member agencies. The GAO report provides a clear connection between staff quantity and stability, and the positive outcomes of young people in their care. The report documented the need to decrease caseloads, ease administrative burdens, expand and improve youth supervision, and strengthen training. These findings are echoed in the Annie E. Casey Foundation publications, *The Unsolved Challenge of System Reform: The Condition of the Frontline Human Services Workforce*. This report states that two of the Key attributes of making a positive difference for children and families is 1) to have reasonable workloads that let workers deploy their skills, and 2) training and development opportunities on the job. SENetwork conducted focus groups in which member agencies provided feedback about the relevance of these findings to their workforce. Members stated that they experience the same struggles which are escalated. For them by the decrease in funding by every source: community, state, federal, and consolidated accounts. They requested help in securing more caring adults to support their youth, and in obtaining the training necessary to be effective in their work with youth.

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the federal Department of Health and Human Services funds many SENetwork member agencies to provide Basic Center Programs (BCP), which are emergency shelter programs that work with runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth. FYSB has identified safe exits from BCP as a critical indicator of positive youth outcomes, and has established a goal for all BCP to have a 95% safe exit rate within the next five years (*Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Programs Announcement, 2006*). FSYB suggests that one practice that leads to high safe exit rates is for each youth to have one-to-one time with a skilled caring adult who will develop safe exit plans with them. SENetwork has developed this SENCorps Project proposal in response to these needs.

MEMBERS ROLES: AmeriCorps members will serve side by side with other youth care professionals in order to provide: supervision of daily activities, one-on-one support, facilitation of safe exit planning, and life skills instruction to youth participating in the program. In addition, members will work together with program staff to extend outreach and support to other community volunteers. These two efforts will increase the number of caring adults available to interact with youth in crisis regarding the development of safe exit plans, thereby increasing the likelihood of youth exiting programs to safe and appropriate next steps. Further, by increasing the person hours available, all those working with the youth will have the time necessary to participate in ongoing training and professional development, thereby increasing their skill level to work effectively with youth in need. Finally, AmeriCorps members will provide increased community awareness and community contact through outreach to potential community volunteers, thereby increasing the capacity of the organization to recruit additional community volunteers. They will provide training and support to community volunteers once they are themselves fully oriented to the program.



SENCorps Member Exit Strategy Preparing for Life after AmeriCorps

SENCorps/AmeriCorps service has many personal and professional benefits if you, as a member, take advantage of the opportunities. There are the obvious benefits of an educational award, and the satisfaction of assisting young people in taking safe next steps for their future. For full time members there are living allowances/stipends, health insurance and childcare benefits. However, there are also less obvious opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, contacts, and experience that will enhance you professionally and personally. This form is a tool to help you and your Project Site Manager and/or AmeriCorps Coach to map out your service term so that you can exit SENCorps/ AmeriCorps with maximum benefits. Please complete this tool in consultation with your Project Site Manager (PSM) within 30 days of beginning your service, and keep a copy for you and your file. Your AmeriCorps Coach will reflect on this plan with you throughout your term of service.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What do you want to do after your current term of service?

2. What knowledge, skills, contacts, and experiences will help you do that? Which of these can be obtained or enhanced through your SENCorps/AmeriCorps service?

3. What do you most want to get and achieve during your SENCorps/AmeriCorps service?

What assistance can your PSM or AmeriCorps Coach provide to enable this to occur?

4. How do you plan to meet the hours and responsibilities of your service term? What is your schedule for completing hours within the prescribed service term? In what activities will you engage during your service hours? What support and/or recognition would be a meaningful encouragement to help you follow through with this plan?

5. What barriers, opportunities or challenges would make it difficult for you to complete your service term? How can your PSM or AmeriCorps Coach assist you in addressing these issues in order to successfully complete your service term?

6. How do you plan to celebrate your achievement of becoming an AmeriCorps alum?
