



Ideas for “AmeriCorps for a Day”

One of the recommended activities to pursue during AmeriCorps Week is to sponsor “AmeriCorps for a Day” events, in which local officials, community leaders, well-known individuals, and/or media representatives are invited to serve as an AmeriCorps member for a period of time—an hour, a morning, or even a day. Following is information and suggestions for how to go about doing it.

What is AmeriCorps for a Day?

The concept is to recruit highly visible members of your community to become a symbolic member of AmeriCorps, either for a short period of time—remember, these folks keep very busy schedules—or even for an entire day. During their service, these community leaders will experience what it is like to perform service through the program. See “**What should happen on the day itself?**” (below) for specific ideas on what participants can do during their time with your organization.

What are the objectives in recruiting participants and creating this day?

The primary goal is to raise public awareness about the role played by AmeriCorps in your community. Involving local leaders achieves this in two ways: directly, as these leaders then take the knowledge they gain back to their own organizations, and indirectly, through publicity generated by the day. There is also the hope that participants in AmeriCorps for a Day become long-term supporters.

Who are ideal candidates to invite to participate?

- Mayor
- State Representative
- Prominent Clergy Leader
- CEO or Senior Executive of locally-based company
- College/University president
- Radio or TV Personality
- Professional Athlete
- Actor/Singer/Entertainment Celebrity
- Police Chief
- Prominent local business owner
- Prominent Reporter/Editorial/Op-ed Writer

When should you begin recruiting?

Your targets for this initiative are prominent people with very busy schedules. In order to pull off “AmeriCorps for a Day” during AmeriCorps Week, you will need to issue invitations as soon as possible.

What should happen on the day itself?

Be conscious of the fact that you are opening up your program to very influential people and you want to put your best foot forward. Arrange only as many participants as you can handle efficiently and flawlessly. If you can only handle one participant, that is fine. What you most want to avoid is leaving a prominent leader with a bad impression of your organization or of AmeriCorps as a whole.

On the day itself, ideas for what the participants can do include:

- Attend a staff meeting of the grantee organization.
- Shadow an existing AmeriCorps member.
- Get involved in the direct service typically conducted by AmeriCorps member (e.g. tutor, clean up park, assist patients, etc.).
- Eat lunch with staff and/or clients.
- Meet with board members at a casual reception.
- Include other members of his or her own organization (if applicable) to assist with direct service for part of the day.

How can you make the case to candidates to serve as “AmeriCorps for a Day”?

There are many compelling reasons you can offer candidates. Here are a few:

- This is an important program filled by people who are meeting vital needs in the community. The only way to keep it growing and vibrant is to have influential people help us put the spotlight on the importance of service.
- Your involvement will reflect very well on your own organization’s commitment to our community.
- As a thank you for your involvement, we would be glad to create a service project for later in the year that involves employees from your organization.
- We will not ask you for money, though we hope you will take an interest in the future success of AmeriCorps and [*name of your organization*].

How can you get publicity for this activity?

- You might consider putting a notice in your local paper announcing that you are looking for local leaders to “serve for a day” as part of AmeriCorps Week.
- Once the details are finalized for the day itself, invite local press to cover some or all of the day. The invite should be issued at least 10 days ahead of time. Consider including at least one member of the media (e.g. local weatherman, local Op-Ed writer) as part of your group of participants. This will make coverage much more likely.
- Take your own photographs of the day – with a focus on moments when the leader is engaged in direct service – and send to your local paper immediately with a caption that you write.
- For other ideas, consult the Media Tips documents in the Michigan’s AmeriCorps Week toolkit at <https://tinyurl.com/acweek-toolkit>.