

Member Handbook 2017-2018

RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program



EMBARC



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Section 1. Welcome

Congratulations! You have made the important decision to dedicate the upcoming year serving as an AmeriCorps member. This gives you a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve the lives of struggling families who have come to Iowa as refugees. Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps will provide you with a unique opportunity to grow both personally and professionally while preparing you for whatever comes next in your life! RefugeeRISE is eager to begin this journey with you!

This “Member Handbook” provides information on the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program and how you can have a successful year in service. If you have questions as you read this handbook or at any other time, please talk to your site supervisor or call your RefugeeRISE program director.

—Refugees’ Story

Over the past 10 years, the United States government has resettled more than 18 thousand refugees directly to Iowa. These newcomers are finally safe from violent racial, religious, and political persecution that caused their original displacement. In addition, they no longer languish in dangerous and hopeless refugee camps in which they were imprisoned for years, and sometimes even decades, after fleeing for their lives into neighboring nations. These grateful new Iowans now face a different set of challenges for which they are ill-equipped to navigate. Tasks like finding a job, learning English, accessing existing resources, and obtaining necessities like warm clothes, medicine and food are tremendous hurdles that refugees must face. They must do this without modern life skills and while trying to make sense of a bewildering new culture and environment.

—RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program

Refugees receive little support as they transition to their new lives as Iowans. Most must figure out what to do on their own. However, mainstream service organizations, faith communities, community-based organizations and—most notably—refugee ethnic groups have recently come together to organize, identify volunteers, and begin to provide help to community members. Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center (EMBARC) is one organization that has taken the lead. Recently, EMBARC created the RefugeeRISE program. RISE stands for **Refugee Rebuild, Integrate, Serve, and Empower**.

The RefugeeRISE program helps:

- Remove barriers to accessing basic services.
- Break the poverty cycle by focusing on providing supports that lead to economic self-sufficiency.
- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support.
- Enable refugees to become contributing and engaged members of society.
- Provide basic education to help refugees learn how to navigate modern life.
- Provide leadership opportunities to refugees and other individuals by providing opportunities for service and volunteering.

—What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps members carry on an American tradition of service that dates back to the founding of our nation. AmeriCorps is often referred to as “the domestic Peace Corps.” It is a national service program that provides thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds with living allowances and education awards in exchange for a term of community engagement. AmeriCorps was created as part of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. CNCS now makes it possible for service-minded organizations to provide assistance in more than 900 programs nationwide.

AmeriCorps is one component of the federally-based and federally-funded [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#). CNCS works with governor-appointed state commissions, non-profit groups, schools, faith-based groups, and other civic organizations. CNCS provides opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve their communities by meeting critical needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas.

In Iowa, CNCS works through the [Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service \(ICVS\)](#). The state commission works with the Governor’s Office to administer funding through grants to various public and private programs...including the RefugeeRise AmeriCorps Program.

All national service programs are united by four common goals. They:

- Get things done through direct service and demonstrable service to help solve community problems in areas of education, public safety, environment, and other human needs.
- Strengthen communities by bringing together Americans of all ages and backgrounds in the common effort to improve our communities.
- Encourage responsibility by enabling members to explore and exercise their responsibilities toward their communities, their families, and themselves.
- Expand opportunity by enhancing members’ educational opportunities, job experience, and life skills.

—RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps goals

To achieve RefugeeRISE goals, EMBARC coordinates activities of AmeriCorps members who serve with us. AmeriCorps members provide education and outreach, and lead efforts to recruit, train, and support volunteers for a variety of outreach programs. In addition, they provide one-on-one needs assessment and referrals, and provide interpretation and translation assistance. AmeriCorps members can be placed in agencies, organizations, and institutions (government, faith-based, non-profit, school, and community-based) that provide service and supports to various refugee communities in Iowa. More information on goals and performance measure can be found at [RefugeeRISE website performance measure page](#).

—Service Activities

While serving with RefugeeRISE, your AmeriCorps members will assist you in meeting your mission and goals. Activities have been predetermined by the grant, but do allow for some flexibility. Whatever the work, it's important for the member to create a plan for sustainability after the team's service ends.

Approved duties include:

- Connecting refugee families to community supports;
- Managing volunteers;
- Giving public presentations and performing outreach;
- Providing translation services;
- Directly providing education to refugee community members in the areas of healthy futures and economic opportunity.

—Program Partners

In addition to EMBARC as lead agency, the following stakeholders play an important role in supporting a high quality RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program as visionaries and resource providers:

- **Iowa Refugee Advisory Board:** The Refugee Advisory board sets the overall direction for the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program. It consists of refugee community members, service providing organizations, business, and state and local government representatives.
- **The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS)** promotes volunteerism and community service throughout the state of Iowa. ICVS, which is part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, is the lead funder for AmeriCorps RefugeeRISE. ICVS oversees and closely monitors approximately 15 AmeriCorps State programs in Iowa. Since 1994, more than 2,700 Iowans have qualified for AmeriCorps education awards totaling more than \$9,500,000.
- **The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** is, as mentioned above, the federal agency that allocates funding to each state volunteer commission, including the ICVS, so they may operate AmeriCorps programs. CNCS closely oversees each state commission and the AmeriCorps programs that they sponsor.

Section 2: Your AmeriCorps Service

—Term of Service

During your term of service, you are required to serve a minimum number of hours AND through your contract end date. It is **your responsibility** to communicate and work with your site supervisor and program director to complete this commitment by your contract end date. This term of service may be extended, in writing, by you and the program for the following reasons:

- Your service has been suspended due to compelling personal circumstances as described in Section III.
- Your service has been terminated, but a grievance procedure has resulted in reinstatement.
- You have not received one year to complete the contracted hours; you began your term of service after Sept. 1, but before Nov. 30.

You must complete your contracted service hours - not including vacation, holiday, or sick days - to qualify for an education award. (A maximum of 20 percent of the hours served may be spent on training, education, or other similar approved activities.)

—Rewarding Service Opportunities

Host site organizations agree to provide an opportunity for direct and meaningful service for you as a member. You should be able to learn about yourself *and* the work of the organization during your service. You will establish S.M.A.R.T. goals during your term of service (personal and work development).

Organizations must provide adequate supervision in order to facilitate the learning and growth described above. An environment should be established that challenges you to fulfill the four-part mission of AmeriCorps as outlined earlier in this handbook. The site supervisor will provide information, orientation, guidance, and support necessary to contribute to the organization's programs and for you to have the opportunity to experience personal and professional growth.

—Additional Term Eligibility

AmeriCorps members can serve up to four terms of service and are eligible for up to 2 full time education awards. A second term of service should not be considered your right or entitlement.

To be eligible for a second term of service with AmeriCorps RefugeeRISE:

- Members must receive satisfactory performance reviews and demonstrate an expanded scope of responsibility at the host site;
- Members must complete the required number of service hours within contracted service period;
- Members may be requested to complete a letter of application stating reasons for consideration for a second term of service and list accomplishments during their first term of service if they wish to serve a second term with a different host site;
- Funds must be secured by AmeriCorps RefugeeRISE through the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.

Note: Merely meeting the above criteria does not guarantee selection or placement.

Section 3: 2015-2016 AmeriCorps Member Benefits

AmeriCorps members receive certain benefits for service. Note: At this time, AmeriCorps RefugeeRISE enrolls full-time members only.

	Full Time	Half Time	Quarter Time
Living Allowance	A total living allowance of \$13,750 (pre-tax) is issued in equal bi-weekly payments to the member via direct deposit on the last service/working day of the month.	A total living allowance of \$7,000 (pre-tax) is issued in equal bi-weekly payments to the member via direct deposit.	A total living allowance of \$3,500 (pre-tax) is issued in equal bi-weekly payments to the member via direct deposit.
Education Award Stipend	Upon successful completion of 1,700 hours of service, AmeriCorps members qualify for a \$5,815.00 education award in the form of a voucher.	Upon successful completion of 900 hours of service, AmeriCorps members qualify for a \$2,907.50 education award in the form of a voucher.	Upon successful completion of 450 hours of service, AmeriCorps members qualify for a \$1,538.36 education award in the form of a voucher.
	The education award can be used up to seven years after the completion of a member's term of service to repay qualified student loans or to pay toward the cost of attending a Title IV institution of higher education. The award is considered federal taxable income in the year(s) used. Members can receive the equivalent of two full-time education awards during their lifetime.		
Student Loans	Members may qualify for forbearance on the repayment of qualified student loans during their term of service. Members may request this benefit in their My AmeriCorps account. Additionally, if the member has received forbearance on a qualified student loan during their term of service, the National Service Trust may repay a portion or all of the interest that accrued on the loan during the member's term of service. The member may apply for Interest Accrual online through the My AmeriCorps account at the end of their term of service. Interest payments will be sent to the member's loan holders.		
Health Insurance	Full-time members who do not have adequate health care coverage at the time of enrollment or who lose coverage due to participation in the program are eligible for basic AmeriCorps healthcare insurance. The coverage is at no cost to members; dependents are not covered.	Not Available	Not Available
Childcare Subsidy	Full-time members with eligible dependents may receive financial assistance for childcare during their term of service. The specific amount of assistance is based on state income guidelines. The member's family must first be income-eligible, and the child(ren)'s caregiver must be considered a legal provider in the state.	Not available	Not Available
Training	Members receive AmeriCorps and on-site orientations in addition to the opportunity to attend the Iowa Non-Profit Summit, statewide AmeriCorps retreats, and local level trainings/workshops deemed useful by both the program and host site.		

Section 4. Training Opportunities/Requirements

—Program Trainings

Training is another important benefit of serving with RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps. Supervisors must allow you to have time away from the host site to attend all mandatory RefugeeRISE trainings and retreats. The program covers all expenses related to attending mandatory statewide AmeriCorps trainings (transportation and lodging accommodations for out of town attendees, meals, materials) at the discretion of the Program Director.

AmeriCorps RefugeeRISE training minimally consists of:

1. Mandatory 1-day New Member training in the fall
2. Mandatory 1-day mid-service term training in the winter
3. Mandatory 1-day mid-service term training in the spring
4. Mandatory 1-day end of service term training in the summer
5. Iowa Non-profit Summit, 2-day statewide conference sponsored by the ICVS
6. Weekly training conference video calls and other distance learning opportunities

Training locations will rotate among the most central locations with RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps host sites. In addition to these trainings, the program may require members participate in distance learning opportunities to be determined at a later time.

Note: Training and professional development opportunities cannot exceed 20% of your total yearly contracted service hours.

—Personal Development

If you have not earned a high school diploma and/or achieved U.S. citizenship, you also will be required to work toward completing one of two goals while serving in AmeriCorps. Assistance will be provided to help you enroll in classes and take the necessary exams. If you have achieved these goals, you will be required to establish another personal development goal. The time you spend on personal development can be counted toward your service time requirements (up to the 20 percent maximum training time limit).

—Goal Development

Personal training hours cannot count for a member until they have completed and have had a goal approved by their site supervisor and the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program. Each member will use an established goal template to fill out their personal and professional goal.

—Training Resources

RefugeeRISE strives to keep resources to trainings open and clear to members. The member website holds previous trainings' resources and recordings along with up and coming trainings. Most training resources are found at refugeerise.weebly.com/training1.html

In addition to the posted trainings, the RefugeeRISE staff regularly advertises and encourages training, conferences, and workshops for members.

Section 5: Onboarding and Orientation

Starting at your service site requires the completion of many forms and documents. This is similar to starting a new job.

—Getting Started

As soon as you accept a position with the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program, you will need to complete the following items prior to beginning their term of service:

- Complete and submit criminal history check authorization forms that are included in the Background Check Packet.
- Get fingerprinted at a local law enforcement office and submit cards at the EMBARAC office.
- Submit the fingerprint receipt and the Mileage and Reimbursement Form to recoup the cost of fingerprinting.

You will need to email/ mail the following documents to RefugeeRISE staff to complete the enrolling process with for payroll and benefits:

- Driver's License
- Signed Social Security Card
- Birth Certificate or Passport
- Banking information for setting up direct deposit
- Copy of proof of health insurance (if they choose to opt out of AmeriCorps health care coverage)
- Information needed to complete Federal and State W-4 forms (W-4, I-9, Employee Registration, etc.)

In addition to these paper forms, AmeriCorps members will also have to complete two online accounts.

- [My.AmeriCorps.Gov](#)- This is the account that holds the members education award, where to create National Service Forbearance requests, and includes tax documents pertaining to the member's education award.
 - More information can be found at refugeerise.weebly.com/education-award.html
- [IowaGrants.Gov](#)- This is a state run website where members will record their service hours. It also holds their signed MSAs.
 - More information can be found at refugeerise.weebly.com/iowa-grants.html

—Background Checks

Traditionally, AmeriCorps programs place members in service positions helping some of the most vulnerable members of the community. For this reason, background checks are very important. Host site supervisors and members will complete a Background Check Disclosure and Authorization form to document permission for Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps to obtain a background check. The background check will include law enforcement records checks in

Iowa and any other state of residence, the National Sex Offender Registry check and the Iowa Child Abuse Registry. This information will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility to serve as an AmeriCorps member with RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps. **You may not begin supervising members or begin keeping track of your in-kind hours until your background check is clear. Members may not begin direct service until they obtain clear background checks.**

Day one of service at your site sets the tone for the entire service term. Follow the information below to get your members off to a great start!

—RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Orientation

All members will participate in an online orientation with RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program staff on their first day and an in-person orientation within their first month. Orientation will cover topics such as, but not limited to: history of AmeriCorps, members' rights and responsibilities, AmeriCorps benefits, prohibited activities, citizenship, and other topics specific to working with refugee populations. Out of town members will receive travel reimbursement and overnight lodging depending on travel distance to the orientation site at the Program Director's discretion. In addition to this, the host site will provide and orientation specific to your placement site.

—Orientation Checklist

Members who begin their year of service well-oriented to their placement site – and the community that the organization serves – have the greatest potential for increased productivity and personal growth. Therefore, all partnering community host sites are required to provide a thorough on-site orientation on day one of member service. Technically, AmeriCorps members are neither staff nor volunteers. However, they should be treated as first year employees with regard to policies and procedures orientation/training. Use the following checklist to prepare:

Host Site Organization Information

- Organization's history, mission, goals
- Chain of command and organizational structure (where does AmeriCorps member fit in?)
- Highlights of the community and details of specific community partners
- Introductions to staff members, board members, regular volunteers
- Contact information (phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc.) for key staff
- Layout of facility/grounds (alarms, exits, etc.)
- Access to organizational materials – logos, newsletters, documents, etc.
- Announcement of member(s)' arrival and description of AmeriCorps roles at the site

Site Policies and Procedures

- Policies and procedures regarding sickness, vacation, and personal leave
- Work schedule (start/end time)
- AmeriCorps trainings/meetings (verification that members are excused from all on-site activities in order to attend required AmeriCorps trainings/conferences)

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- Frequency and time of staff meetings between the AmeriCorps member and site supervisor
 - Meal/break periods (time and location)
 - Dress code (AmeriCorps members are required/should to wear logo clothing or a pin during service hours)
 - Telephone use (where is the phone, how to dial out, etc.) and etiquette (how to answer)
 - Computer etiquette (where and when can AmeriCorps member use the computer and email, including identification of the member as AmeriCorps in the member's signature)
 - Mailbox for messages
 - Where to keep personal belongings
 - Smoking (rules, approved location, etc.)
 - Lactation (rules, approved location, etc.)
 - Parking
 - Procedures for reporting internal problems or grievances
 - Accidents (what to do if member, staff, or volunteer is injured)
 - Medical/hazardous waste policy
 - First aid procedures
 - Emergency procedures (who to contact depending on the situation and where to find emergency contacts, phone number extensions, etc.)
 - Rules of confidentiality (customer/client/student information, organizational information)

—On-Site Orientation

Outlining and reviewing specific service expectations with the AmeriCorps member upon arrival, and revisiting them at regular intervals, ensures that both member and site supervisor have a clear understanding of what the member should accomplish over the course of his/her term of service. The goal is for the member to feel a sense of ownership in his/her service plan for the year. In order to facilitate this:

- Review specific AmeriCorps roles and responsibilities for the service year as outlined in the member's service position description;
- Establish goals and objectives for success;
- Provide projects, tasks, and assignments throughout the year allowing the member to develop and exercise leadership;
- Communicate/meet on a regular and consistent basis with the member regarding projects and the attainment of goals and objectives;
- Revisit roles and responsibilities periodically and revise if necessary (please inform the Program Director of any changes you would like to make).

Section 6: Roles & Responsibilities

—Site Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities

Site supervisors play a variety of roles to help you complete your term with AmeriCorps. The site supervisor will:

- Be the primary/daily point of contact for you during your term of service;
- Assist in training and orienting you to your host site and community;
- Provide ongoing advising and mentoring during your term of service;
- Provide professional development opportunities.

As stated previously, one of the Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps objectives is to provide you with a variety of opportunities for professional and personal development. You, in turn, provide opportunities for the host organization to build capacity in order to offer increased services and programming for refugees. Quality supervision and mentorship is critical in helping to maximize the benefits of service for you and your host organization. The supervisor should:

- Provide ongoing supervision through regularly scheduled meetings;
- Review your service position descriptions with you to address the program's performance measurement objectives;
- Maintain open communication;
- Identify and document your training needs and opportunities for professional development;
- Involve you in appropriate staff meetings, retreats, and training events;
- Provide direct and honest feedback on all aspects of your performance on a regular basis including positive aspects as well as areas in need of strengthening.

—Member Expectations

The expectations for your service year are presented in detail in the Member Service Position Description that you receive at the beginning of your service term. Your site supervisor will review these specific service expectations with you upon arrival and revisit them at regular intervals to ensure that you both have a clear understanding of what you should accomplish over the course of your term of service. The goal is for you to feel a sense of ownership in your service plan for the year. In order to facilitate this:

- Meet with your host site supervisor to review specific AmeriCorps roles and responsibilities for the service year as outlined in your Member Service Position Description;
- Establish goals and objectives for program success;
- Work with your supervisor to plan projects, tasks, and assignments throughout the year that allow you to develop and exercise leadership;
- Communicate/meet on a regular and consistent basis with your supervisor regarding projects and the attainment of goals and objectives;
- Revisit roles and responsibilities periodically and revise if necessary (with the approval of the Program Director of RefugeeRISE).

Note: Your service hours may NOT include clerical work, research, or fundraising unless such activities are directly related to an AmeriCorps project/event and one of the program's performance measurement objectives. Fundraising cannot exceed 10% of your total yearly contracted service

hours. In addition, service hours may not include hours filling in for an employee who is out of the office on leave. If any of these situations occur, please immediately contact the program director.

—Feedback on Member Performance

Site supervisors play a crucial role in fostering your professional and personal development. As a director and mentor, supervisors have the ability to observe performance and provide feedback regarding what you do well, what skills need to develop further, and what future career/educational paths you might want to explore. Given this critical role, the program has the following expectation regarding appraisal of your performance:

- You will be evaluated after six months (or mid-term) of service and at the end of the service year. Supervisors must use the Iowa RefugeeRISE Appraisal form to provide this appraisal. Your six-month and final performance appraisal and you Evaluation Acknowledgement, with original signatures, are sent to the Program director and kept in your member file.
- Your formal evaluation should provide a summary of the feedback given by your supervisor over time as you serve. Evaluations should not contain any surprises.

—Prohibited Activities

The [Iowa Commission of Volunteer Service](#) along with the [Corporation on National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) is serious about oversight and evaluation of members participating in prohibited activities. Below is a list of prohibited activities provided by the CNCS. It is very important that you DO NOT allow members to participate in these activities while acting as an AmeriCorps member and charging AmeriCorps hours.

AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities (45 CFR §§ 2520.65, § 2520.20, § 2520.45)

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. 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;
7. 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;
8. Providing a direct benefit to –
 - A business organized for profit;
 - A labor union;
 - A partisan political organization;

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- A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities;
 - 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;
Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 - Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit including:
Raising funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
 - Writing a grant application to the Corporation or any other Federal agency
 - An AmeriCorps member may spend no more than ten percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust, performing fundraising activities.

—Fundraising

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 so.

AmeriCorps members may raise resources only as long as they directly in support of your program's service activities. Examples of fundraising activities AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
2. Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
3. Securing financial resources from the community to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through members of a community-based organization;
Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.

—Nonduplication/Nondisplacement (45 CFR §§ 2540.100)

The CNCS is also very serious about the nonduplication/nondisplacement provisions. Please review these carefully and ensure your site's compliance. (e) Nonduplication. Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a

program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides. (f) Nondisplacement. 45 CFR §§ 2520.100

1. An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use of such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
2. An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
3. A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
4. A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
5. A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities, that – (i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or (ii) Are services, duties or activities with respect to which individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
6. A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform services or duties that have performed by or were assigned to any – (i) Presently employed worker; (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged; (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures; (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or (v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

Section 7. Rules of Conduct

Members will explicitly be made aware of the rules of conduct during the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps orientation -- you sign your acknowledgement as part of your Member Contract.

—Member Rules

You are expected, while acting in an official capacity as an AmeriCorps member, to at all times:

1. Demonstrate mutual respect toward others;
2. Follow supervisor directions and work on assignments in a reliable and conscientious manner;
3. Follow all policies and procedures of the host site organization;
4. Keep accurate weekly time records that are submitted monthly, checked and approved by the site supervisor by the 5th of each month for the previous month of service.

At no time may you engage in:

1. Any prohibited activity (see section entitled Prohibited Activities in Appendix 1);
2. Verbal or physical conduct which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment;
3. Conduct which sexually harasses others;
4. Any activity that is illegal under local, state, or federal law;
5. Activities that pose a significant safety risk to others.

—Violation of Behavioral Expectations and Corresponding Discipline Actions

Well-established service position descriptions, ongoing supervision, and performance appraisals should lead to a sound relationship between you and your supervisor. There may be times, however, when more direct and documented feedback is required regarding conduct or performance. If things seem irresolvable, you, your site supervisor, and program director at EMBARC must work collectively to determine solutions to address the challenges.

Minimally, when you and your site supervisor experience an issue of conflict, the supervisor will follow the progressive discipline steps detailed below:

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- **Step 1:** The site supervisor will speak to you about the issue and call the AmeriCorps program director to inform of the situation. The program director may be able to help resolve the issue. A note with a description of what was said and done will be placed in your member file and shared with the program director.
 - **Step 2:** The site supervisor will give a verbal warning to the member, clearly describing the problem and steps necessary for improvement. The site supervisor will document the conversation by creating a note for the member's file that is shared with the program director.
 - **Step 3:** If the problem persists, the supervisor will give a written warning describing the behavior. In this written warning, he or she will describe the steps you must make that are necessary for improvement. The supervisor should also describe procedures taken if behavior does not improve. This could include a suspension from service. This step will be documented in your file and shared with the program director.
 - **Step 4:** If there is still no improvement, you may be released from your service term for cause after the program director has been notified.

The Program Director and site supervisor both must concur that release for cause is appropriate. At any time, you are encouraged to contact the program director at RefugeeRISE to discuss any conflicts or concerns.

— Release from Service & Grievance Procedure

As detailed above, members can be released from service for performance problems. Host sites cannot independently terminate your service — this procedure must be facilitated through the program director. You may be released for two reasons - for “cause” or for “compelling personal circumstances.”

- “Cause” is defined as violating the rules of conduct, dropping out of the program without obtaining a release, being charged with a felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance, or any other serious breach that in the judgment of the Program director, undermines the effectiveness of the program. In the event you are released for cause, you may contest the program's decision by filing a grievance. This grievance process may include an alternative dispute resolution process such as mediation. Please refer to the Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Grievance Policy for detailed information.
- “Compelling personal circumstances” include, but are not limited to, events such as acquiring a serious illness or injury that makes completing your term of service impossible, illness or death of an immediate family member, or being drafted by the Armed Services. You cease to receive benefits under the program when you are released from service due to compelling personal circumstances. If, however, you have completed at least 15% of your required service hours, you may receive a prorated portion of the education award, loan forbearance, and interest accrual payments.

Note: Relocation, acceptance to a college or university, or the acceptance of an employment offer (other than a “welfare to work” offer) DO NOT constitute a compelling personal circumstance.

Things to keep in mind regarding the discontinuation of service:

- When a member discontinues service, whether for compelling personal circumstances, cause or without cause, the final living allowance payment will be prorated to reflect the portion of the reporting period the member served.
- The member ceases to receive benefits under the program when discontinuing his/her term of service due to compelling personal circumstances. If, however, the member has completed at least 15% of their required service hours, the member may receive a prorated portion of the education award, loan forbearance, and interest accrual payments.
- In the event an AmeriCorps member is released for cause, the member may contest the program's decision by filing a grievance. These procedures include an opportunity for a hearing and binding arbitration. This process may include an alternative dispute resolution process such as mediation. Please refer to the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Grievance Policy for detailed information.

Section 8: Recording Your Time

—Recording Service Hours

Members are responsible for completing timesheets and submitting them to their site supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for verifying the accuracy and approving your timesheets. The Iowa RefugeeRISE timesheet is important for the following reasons.

- Timesheets help monitor your service hours and ensures you are on track to complete the required number of service hours necessary to receive an education award.
- Timesheets provide an accurate record of service when the Corporation for National Service makes an appeal to Congress for refunding.
- Timesheets provide an accurate record of service in the event of a federal or state audit.

AmeriCorps hours are entered and tracked through IowaGrants (www.iowagrants.gov). All members and site supervisors will register for this system. Visit the [RefugeeRISE website for questions and tutorials](#).

Member Service hours are broken up into three different activities, Direct Service, Training, and Fundraising:

- A member cannot count more than 10% of their total hours to fundraising.
 - Note: fundraising is a highly regulated activity. Please review section 2 on page 6.
- A maximum of 20% of service hours can be spent on training and/or education.

—Days Off

You are responsible for scheduling days off with your site supervisor and should provide a minimum of two weeks' notice before asking for any personal days. You will not be required to serve on any holiday that is observed at the host site. In the case of illness, you will be excused for the day, but you are required to notify your site supervisor as soon as possible before your scheduled hours.

In order to ensure you remain on schedule with your service hours, you must serve extra hours before taking time off other than for emergencies. For instance, if you will be gone for a week, the member must serve an extra 40 hours before leaving on the trip.

If a member has plans to leave their site for more than a two-week period, they must have a written agreement with the host site supervisor and the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program staff approving the time off. If a member does have permission from both the host site and the program, the action may be considered abandoning their AmeriCorps position.

—Teleservice and extended hours procedures

Teleservice

Any time a **member is going to be serving off site outside of their normal service**, they will need to have written permission prior to the event. This can be in the form of an email sent to the RefugeeRISE staff that states where, when, what the member will be working on, why teleservice is needed, and how the member activities will be supervised. Please share a copy of the explanation with RefugeeRISE Staff and it will be added to the member's file.

**This does not include off-site meetings or trainings your members may have. Just activities that are comparable to a staff person working from home

Extended/ Weekend hours:

Any time a member is serving 10 or more hours in a day, the members will also need to document that activity. This is also true for weekend service or training. This will look very similar to the teleservice explanation. Documentation will be an email/ letter from the supervisor that states the member had permission to be serving extended hours, evening, or weekend and they were supervised and working on a specific project.

—FAQs on Timesheets

Q. Do all members need to complete timesheets?

A. Yes, all members are required to complete timesheets and submit the timesheets in the IowaGrants system on a monthly basis. Timesheets are due by the 5th after pay period end dates every two weeks.

Q. Who completes the timesheets?

A. You are responsible for completing your timesheets and submitting them to your site supervisor for approval.

Q. Who approves the timesheets?

A. Your site supervisor is responsible for verifying the accuracy of and approving your timesheets.

Q. How often are timesheets required?

A. Timesheets are required bi-weekly. Hours may be reported and saved in the IowaGrants system daily. When the bi-weekly service period has ended, you must **submit** the timesheets to your site supervisor who then approves the timesheet or returns it for corrections. Please ensure the accuracy of your timesheets. Once approved, the Program Director must request the ICVS to unlock it in order for you to make corrections.

Q. What constitutes a COMPLETED timesheet?

A timesheet is considered complete when it has all of the following components. It

-
- Includes as “Direct Service” only those hours members spend in service and NOT lunch, training, vacation, holidays, sick days or other time off;
 - Has all “Training” hours listed separately;
 - Has all “Fundraising” hours listed separately;
 - Uses the “Comments” column to briefly explain service hours and absence from their service due to vacation, holidays, emergency leave, and sick leave;
 - Is approved by your site supervisor in IowaGrants.

Q. What happens if I don’t submit a timesheet or it is incorrect?

A. If you submit an incorrect timesheet, your site supervisor will return the timesheet to you for corrections. If timesheets are not corrected or are more than one month behind, your stipend/living allowance check may be held until the documents are submitted. You will receive notification via U.S mail, e-mail, or telephone before this occurs.

Section 9: Reporting on Program Objectives

RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps is a grant funded program. As such, there are several performance measurement goals that the program must track and meet. Your site and members play an important role in collecting this information that will help us prove results and influence future funding.

One critical responsibility of site supervisors and members is to collect and keep record of qualitative and quantitative impact data on a daily basis corresponding to the program's performance measurement objectives. This activity should begin on day one of service. The data records will:

- Be used by the program director to create quarterly impact reports required by the ICVS as well to communicate with multiple project stakeholders;
- Assist in identifying programmatic challenges you might be facing;
- Enable your host site supervisor to address your professional development training needs;
- Help you reflect on your year of service and translate your accomplishments and impact for career/professional development advancement purposes.

—Monthly Photo Reflection Project

Iowa RefugeeRISE and our partners want to hear about your great work! You will submit monthly photo reflection which will include a photograph of at your site and a description. The topic changes each month, but are posted at the beginning of the year on the [RefugeeRISE website](#). and a "Reflection" at the end your service. *These reflections are due the first Friday of each month.*

—Bi-Annual Impact Report

Both members and supervisors will work together on a document called an Impact Report. This project gathers a narrative of your service through a series of reflection questions. *This report is due in March and August of your service term.*

—Monthly Performance Measure Reports for 2017-2018

There are four separate performance measure objectives that must be tracked for the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program in documents called the Performance Measure Report. These reports and all required supporting documents are found on the [RefugeeRISE performance measure webpage](#). *Each host site will turn in Performance Measure Reports monthly on the first Friday of the month.*

1. **Member Development: Citizenship and Professional Development Training**

AmeriCorps members from the programs who receive state and local level professional development training increase their knowledge and skills post-training in content areas such as AmeriCorps history, citizenship, conflict resolution, service learning, volunteer management, and implementing programming. Members will participate in a minimum of 3

civic engagement trainings, lessons, or reflection sessions during the term of service. In addition, members will make progress on an individualized professional development goal in the areas of GED, citizenship, or another economic opportunity-related area.

Corresponding performance measurement instruments:

Impact Reports – Personal Professional Development Goal Progress
New Member Training
Life After AmeriCorps Training
Online Civic Engagement Training
Member Civic Engagement Survey
Mentor/Mentee Meeting Logs
End of Term reflection

2. Strengthening Communities: Volunteer Recruitment

AmeriCorps members at each of the program’s host site communities will recruit and/or manage volunteers to deliver research-based programming to refugees in their community. By year end, AmeriCorps members will recruit a program new volunteers with half of the volunteers coming directly from refugee communities. The program goal is 300 episodic and 400 ongoing volunteers (individual goals will vary depending by position type).

Corresponding performance measurement instrument:

Volunteer Recruitment Log

3. Workforce Development

AmeriCorps members will help develop and deliver life-skills workshops and linguistically-appropriate informational resources to 400 refugees enrolled in skill development programs (individual goals will vary depending by position type). Eighty percent of these refugees will report improved attitude, behavior, and/or knowledge from skill development services/classes of at least ten percent.

Corresponding performance measurement instrument:

Referral/Assistance Activity Log
Self-Assessment and Attendance Sheet

4. Healthy Futures

AmeriCorps members will provide information, training and support on wellness, patient rights and responsibility, levels of care, nutrition, health care insurance, access, and benefits to 100 refugees (individual goals will vary depending by position type). Seventy-five percent of these refugees will report improved attitude, behavior, and/or knowledge from skill development services/classes of at least ten percent.

Corresponding performance measurement instrument:

Referral/Assistance Activity Log
Self-Assessment and Attendance Sheet

Section 10. Expected Program Calendar

While each year is different is for the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program there are many things that can be expected throughout the year.

Every Friday	Friday Members Calls via video conferencing
Every two weeks on Monday	Timesheets are due on Iowa Grants.gov
1 st Friday of every month--	Performance Measure Reports are due as a site
1 st Friday of every month-	Photo Reflections are due as an individual member
1 st Friday of every month	Supervisor hours and explanation of any abnormal member service hour.

Mid-September	Most RefugeeRISE members will begin service
Early October	RefugeeRISE Orientation
December	RefugeeRISE in-person training
Early March	Impact Reports are due
Late March	RefugeeRISE in-person training
Mid July	RefugeeRISE in-person training
Early August	Impact Reports are due
Mid- August	Most RefugeeRISE members will end service

Section 11: Additional Information

—Member Service Agreement

At the beginning of the service period, each member signs a Member Service Agreement that sets out the terms of participation for AmeriCorps. Many items are covered in this contract, such as the minimum number of service hours to be served, start and end dates of service period, acceptable conduct, prohibited activities, and other terms of service. Refer to your Member Service Agreement for specific information.

—Member Service Position Description

Host sites must provide a Member Service Position Description outlining your major activities, tasks, and time commitments during your term of service. As mentioned previously, activities should provide you with meaningful service and opportunity for personal growth. These position descriptions will be referenced during your evaluations.

—Drug Free Workplace

All AmeriCorps host sites must comply with the Drug Free Workplace Act. Site supervisors must notify you about the Act and its requirements. Also, if you are arrested or convicted of a drug offense, you and your site supervisor must notify the program director within five days and EMBARC will take appropriate action.

—AmeriCorps Branding

All host sites are required to post an AmeriCorps sign within the vicinity of AmeriCorps members' office space/place of service. One sign will be provided by the program director for your host site. AmeriCorps signs help staff and community partners identify your participation in AmeriCorps. In addition, you should be identified during your service by wearing of AmeriCorps service gear (t-shirt, polo, oxford, etc.) or an AmeriCorps insignia (such as a pin or logo nametag or logo lanyard) during service.

—National Service Days

Throughout the year, the ICVS organizes several national days of service for AmeriCorps members. The program director will notify members and sites of these days.

The CNCS and the ICVS, has placed an emphasis on participating in at least two events. It is expected that each AmeriCorps Program and therefore its sites and members, will develop or have a meaningful role in celebrating Martin Luther King Day. It is also anticipated that an AmeriCorps Week will be celebrated in the spring of 2015.

—Voting

All eligible Iowa RefugeeRISE members are encouraged to register to vote during their term of service, and host sites must allow time to register to vote during their service hours. However, sites cannot require members to register or to vote. Host sites cannot attempt to influence how you vote.

—Jury Duty

Serving on a jury is an important citizenship responsibility. You are encouraged to serve when called and cannot be penalized for serving on jury duty. During the time you serve as a juror, you will continue to receive credit for your normal service hours. Also, you may keep any reimbursements for incidental expenses received from the court.

—Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation

The Iowa RefugeeRISE program director is responsible for ensuring compliance with AmeriCorps policies pertaining to discrimination and reasonable accommodations for members with disabilities. *AmeriCorps programs may not discriminate against any member, program staff, or service recipient on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, political affiliation or disability. Programs must also comply with applicable state nondiscrimination laws.*

RefugeeRISE will provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified member with known mental or physical disabilities. Accommodations must be based on your individual needs. All member candidate selections and service assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation.

AmeriCorps programs are not required to provide accommodations that would impose an undue burden on the program or local host sites. The Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program director will work with the ICVS to determine whether or not specific accommodations are reasonable. Assistance may also be available through the ICVS to help address reasonable accommodation issues.

—Prohibited Activities

As a member, there are certain restrictions on the type of activities you can perform as a member while serving or while identifying yourself as an AmeriCorps member. Examples of prohibited activities include lobbying, proselytizing, and engaging in political activity. See Appendix 1 for complete details.

—Program Director

The RefugeeRISE program director is one of your most valuable resources. The program director helps to develop a strong partnership among the program and the ICVS (state level partner) and the CNCS (federal level partner). The program director is responsible for implementing the grant-funded program and ensuring compliance with all state and federal policies and procedures. Throughout an AmeriCorps program year, you are encouraged to consult with the program director to discuss and address questions, problems, or concerns.

Section 12: AmeriCorps Terminology

RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps terminology has been highlighted below to accurately represent AmeriCorps-related programming activities. Consistent use of these terms will help reinforce the AmeriCorps program's objectives and will assist in clarifying AmeriCorps for the general public. Some frequently used terms related to AmeriCorps are:

AmeriCorps Members: Individuals who participate in AmeriCorps are referred to as "members" rather than volunteers, staff, workers, participants or employees.

Living Allowance: AmeriCorps members earn living allowances, not salaries or wages.

National Service: This term refers to any of the programs affiliated with the CNCS. In addition to AmeriCorps, national service programs include Learn & Serve America, AmeriCorps VISTA, National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), the National Senior Service Corps, and the USA Freedom Corps.

Serve/Service: *Serve* and *service* should be used rather than the term *work* when referring to AmeriCorps members' time and effort spent addressing the Iowa RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program's performance measurement objectives.

Service Site: The location where you perform your service.

Member Service Agreement: Instead of employment contract or other employment agreement, AmeriCorps members sign a member service agreement. This agreement spells out the exact terms of service, expectations, and rules regarding behavior during service.

RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps Program Director: The Program Director is one of the site supervisor's most valuable resources. The Program Director helps to develop a strong partnership among the program and the ICVS and CNCS (both are funding partners). The Program Director also oversees implementation of the grant-funded program and is responsible for insuring compliance with all state and federal policies and procedures. Throughout an AmeriCorps program year, supervisors are encouraged to consult with the Program Director to discuss and address questions, problems, or concerns.

Section 13: Additional Resources

- You site supervisor
- Your teammate
- RefugeeRISE Program Staff
- Other RefugeeRISE Supervisors and members
- RefugeeRISE Website- RefugeeRISE.weebly.com
 - Performance Measures- refugeerise.weebly.com/performance-measures.html
 - Member Page- refugeerise.weebly.com/members.html
 - Supervisor Page-refugeerise.weebly.com/supervisors.html
 - Iowa Grants help - refugeerise.weebly.com/iowa-grants.html
 - Education Award help- refugeerise.weebly.com/education-award.html
 - Training- refugeerise.weebly.com/training1.html
- Corporation for National and Community Service - www.NationalService.org
- Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service - www.volunteeriowa.org
- My.AmeriCorps.gov
- IowaGrants.gov

Section 14: Contact Information

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Appendix

Prohibited Activities. 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 AmeriCorps 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 proselytization;
- 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; and
- k. 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-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.