SERVICE YEAR

SERVICE YEARS AS A STRATEGY TO

Expand Access to Afterschool Programs

CHARLES STEWART
MOTT FOUNDATION®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD: SERVICE YEARS IN AFTERSCHOOL SETTINGS

Afterschool programs provide a wide range of benefits: increasing academic achievement, reducing risky behaviors, promoting physical health, and providing a safe, structured environment for children to learn and thrive. In academic achievement alone, a 2007 national survey showed that 40% of students attending afterschool programming saw an increase in reading and math achievement.[1] Even with this impact, there is an opportunity gap that affects millions of kids each year due to the fact that afterschool providers cannot meet the demand for their services.

Service years are a good strategy for afterschool programs and networks to:

- Increase program capacity with additional human capital
- Expand reach and serve many more kids and families
- Strengthen partnerships between networks, afterschool programs and schools, with community sites and community providers
- Create a community pipeline: kids who grow up in the afterschool program see the service year opportunity as an option on their path to college and career success
- Build deeper relationships with students and achieve significant outcomes

To help afterschool programs maximize learning opportunities for children and youth, Service Year Alliance is committed to expanding the number of service year opportunities that support afterschool programs and networks. We understand that many schools, youth centers, community-based programs, and Statewide Afterschool Networks may be interested in establishing a service year program, but may not know where to start or have the financial and programmatic supports necessary.

With our deep knowledge, vast resources, and active network of service year programs, Service Year Alliance developed this *Service Years as a Strategy to Expand Access to Afterschool Programs* toolkit to enable afterschool programs and networks to design, finance, implement, and gain community support for service year programs that expand opportunities to serve children, youth, and their families.

We hope this toolkit will serve as an inspiration and guide for networks and afterschool programs that want to expand service year opportunities to advance their goals and mission.

Rosa Moreno
Chief Program Officer
Service Year Alliance

---

[1] Youth.gov. Afterschool Programs: Benefits for Youth, Family, & Communities. https://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities

A service year is a paid, full-time opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service. From fighting poverty to mentoring kids to responding to natural disasters – a service year is a meaningful and fulfilling way to tackle the most pressing challenges facing our nation through programs like AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, YouthBuild, and hundreds of others.

A service year refers to service that

- addresses important societal problems,

- requires a substantial time commitment over the course of 9-12 months, and

- is performed through organized programs that are designed to build ties among individuals from diverse backgrounds or increase life opportunities for those who serve.

Because of the substantial time commitment involved, service year corps members are paid modest living allowances. They may also be rewarded with other benefits to support their living needs, such as housing, food vouchers, and travel support.

WHAT IS A SERVICE YEAR?

This toolkit provides the necessary steps to create a service year position at your afterschool program or statewide afterschool network. We worked with afterschool providers and networks to identify a host of tips, tools, activities and resources based on their first-hand experience in utilizing service year positions to advance their goals and mission.

If you are thinking, "I want to add service year positions in my afterschool program or network, now what?", this toolkit is for you.

This is a companion guide to the Creating a Service Year Program toolkit and should be read in tandem.

USE THIS!

TAKE ACTION: BRING AN AFTERSCHOOL SERVICE YEAR MODEL TO LIFE

The purpose of this toolkit is to make it easier to start an afterschool service year program or add service year corps members to an existing afterschool program or network. If after you read this toolkit, you are saying to yourself:

- yes, I want to start an afterschool service year mod program

- yes, I have a need that a service year model would solve

- yes, I want more information

Great! Contact us at Service Year Alliance -- growth@serviceyear.org -- so we can get you started on creating a service year program for your organization.

Service Year Alliance can help you:

- identify the right model for your program or network; or even

- provide low-cost consulting to help you build an afterschool service year program and explore AmeriCorps funding.
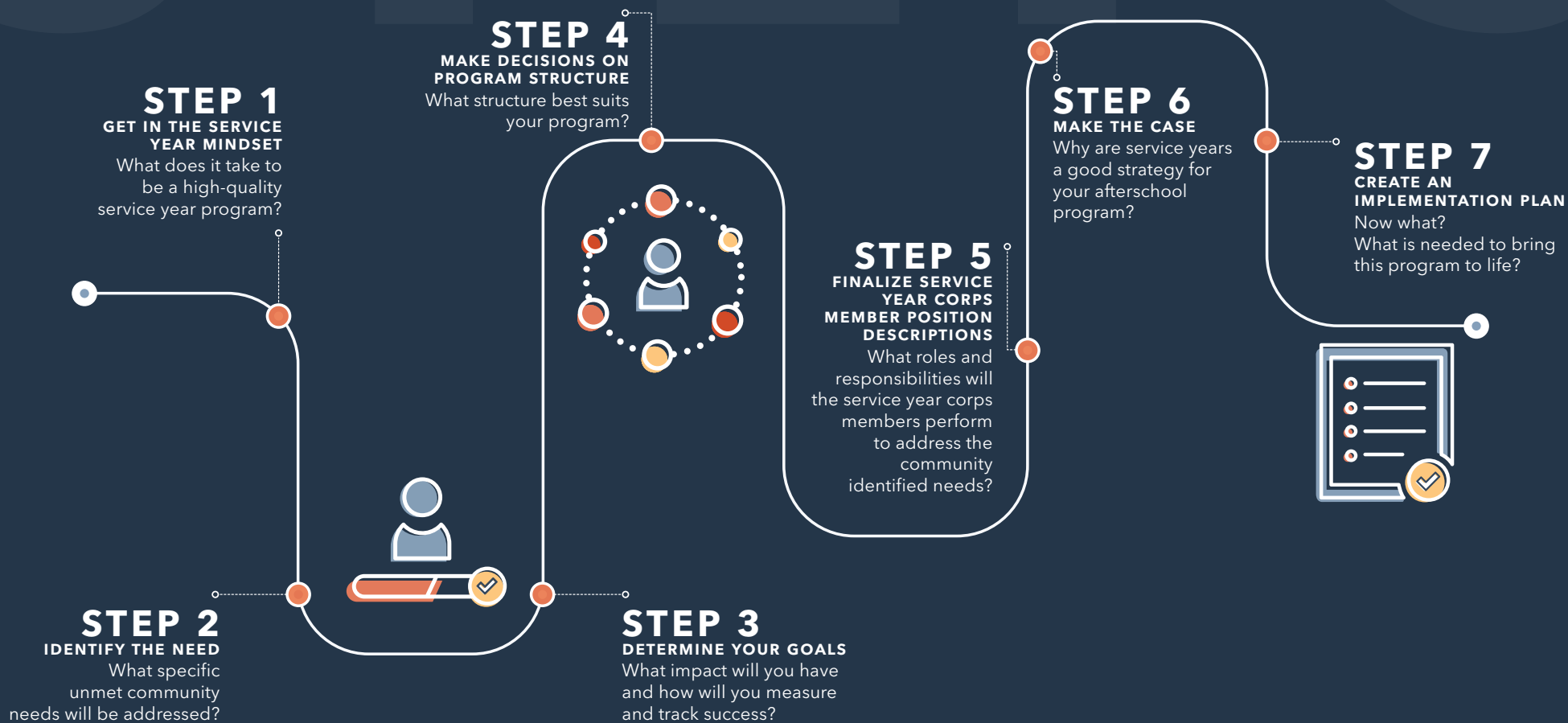
STEPS

STEP 1
GET IN THE SERVICE
YEAR MINDSET
What does it take to
be a high-quality
service year program?

STEP 2
IDENTIFY THE NEED
What specific
unmet community
needs will be addressed?

STEP 3
DETERMINE YOUR GOALS
What impact will you have
and how will you measure
and track success?

STEP 4
MAKE DECISIONS ON
PROGRAM STRUCTURE
What structure best suits
your program?

STEP 5
FINALIZE SERVICE
YEAR CORPS
MEMBER POSITION
DESCRIPTIONS
What roles and
responsibilities will
the service year corps
members perform
to address the
community
identified needs?

STEP 6
MAKE THE CASE
Why are service years
a good strategy for
your afterschool
program?

STEP 7
CREATE AN
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Now what?
What is needed to bring
this program to life?

GET IN THE SERVICE YEAR MINDSET

STEP ONE: GET IN THE SERVICE YEAR MINDSET

We know that starting a service year program can be overwhelming. You might be uncertain about what a service year is or what is required to design a high-quality service year program. That's why Service Year Alliance designed this toolkit; to lower the barrier for designing and starting an afterschool service year program. We worked with afterschool programs and networks to compile in this toolkit all the similar components in creating an afterschool service year program.

This toolkit is a companion piece to our main *Creating A Service Year Program toolkit.* We suggest the following:

First, read through *Service Years as a Strategy to Expand Access to Afterschool Programs.* Familiarize yourself with how you could utilize service years in your organization and the foundational steps needed to design a service year program.

Then read through *Creating A Service Year Program toolkit.* Take all you learned in this toolkit to design, plan, and implement a service year program. The *Creating A Service Year Program toolkit* will guide you through a full process to bring a service year program to your organization. As you work through the toolkit, you only need to fill out the components that are relevant to your organization.

Ready to move on? Let's start by identifying the unmet need that can be addressed by an afterschool service year program.

IDENTIFY THE NEED

STEP TWO: IDENTIFY THE NEED

At this stage, you want to pinpoint unmet needs and map the existing afterschool resources and opportunities. Ideally, your program model is shaped by the local community. Engaging your community will build a thriving program that best meets the needs of the people and organizations it serves.

By taking time to conduct a needs assessment, you can gather information about the afterschool and/or organizational needs. This step should be performed prior to taking action. Use this opportunity to engage community partners to help identify issues, problem solve, and develop goals.

A needs assessment can be accomplished by distributing surveys, conducting interviews, and holding meetings with stakeholders. Work together to assess the current state of the afterschool field. How many of children are enrolled in afterschool programs? How many more would be enrolled if a program were available? Who are the program providers in your community? What have you heard in your community about what is most needed during afterschool hours? What is the gap, if any, between what is needed and what is currently provided? What is it going to take to close the gap? What role does your program or network play in your community? And, how can a service year program support or enhance this role and the youth outcomes you work to achieve?

These questions can inform the program design process, where you establish the specific need that service year corps members will meet. Once you have defined the need, you can begin the next steps of determining what you want to achieve and making decisions that best align with your defined needs.

DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

STEP THREE: DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

Service years models – that provide support services in afterschool programs or networks – are playing a critical role across the nation. Every year, young Americans are committing to a service year to help improve educational outcomes and are serving a large number of low-income students. Service year corps members engage in a variety of roles – they mentor, tutor, support individualized learning, provide extracurricular programming, recruit and manage volunteers, fundraise, and enhance systems to build the capacity of afterschool programs and networks.

Service year corps members support efforts to improve student motivation and student engagement, have a positive impact on children's academic and social development, improve afterschool program's and network's capacity, quality and/or effectiveness, and close opportunity and achievement gaps for students. This toolkit highlights a few specific goals and outcomes to consider as you think through how a service year program can help your organization and community.

Before you decide, "what are we doing - direct service or capacity building?" focus on "what do we want to achieve?". Given the unmet need you have identified, name the desired result or quantified change you want to see. What is your vision for the future?

In the creation of this toolkit, Service Year Alliance researched a number of afterschool service year programs to identify common goals and activities. As reflected in the sample theory of change, afterschool programs and networks focus on achieving academic improvement outcomes for youth, social emotional development, skill/life development and/or organizational capacity building.
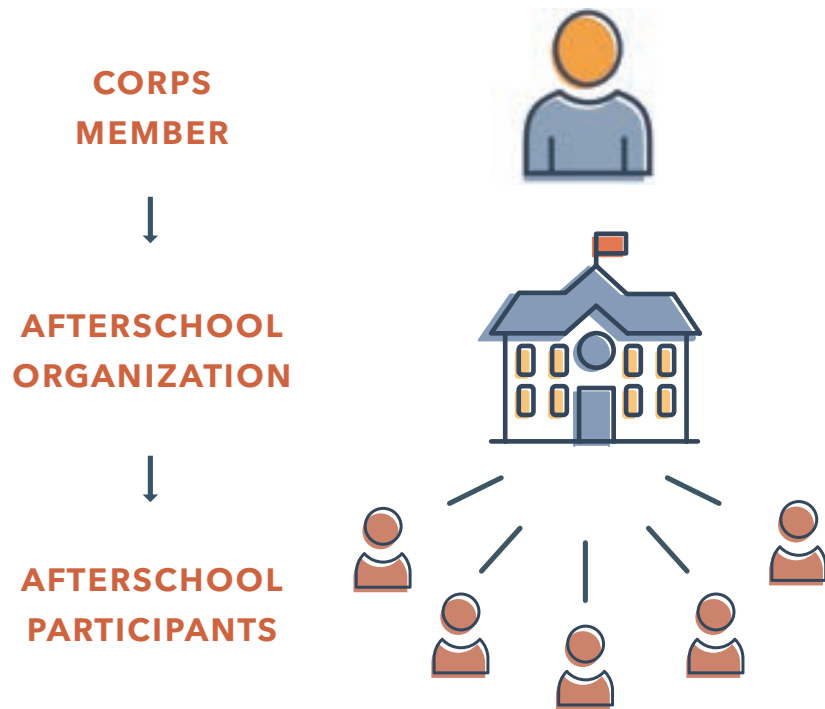
Your afterschool program and network may already have a theory of change that describes the outcomes and impact for participants, as well as the inputs, activities and outputs that lead to the outcomes. When designing service year positions to support your afterschool program or network, it is helpful to develop a theory of change to describe the specific need or problem that service year corps members address and the intended outcomes and impact.

Consider the following examples of direct service and capacity building service outcomes to determine which goals are best to address your identified program or network needs.
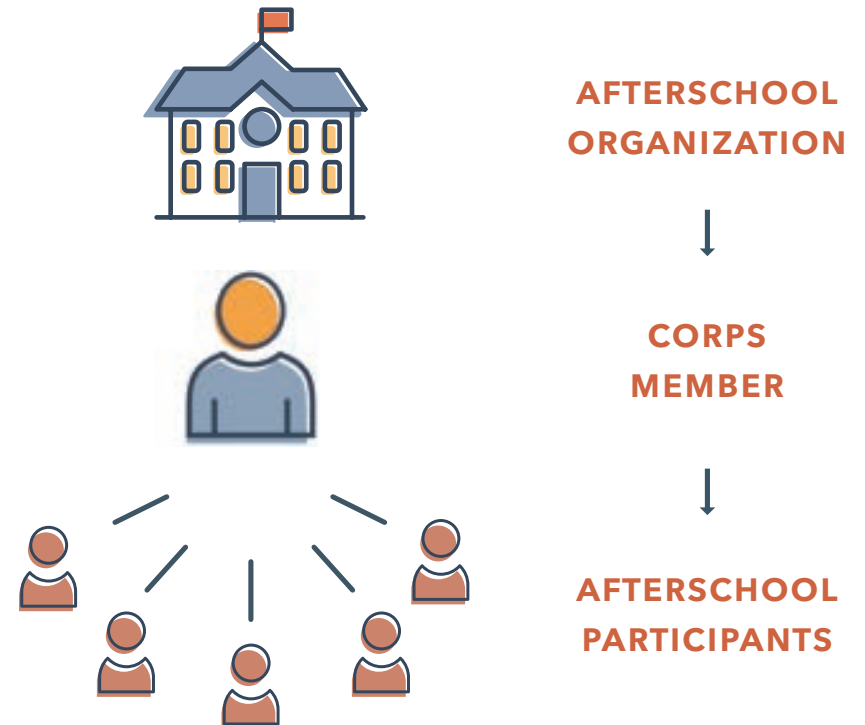
"direct service"—that is, helping the students of an afterschool program directly, or "capacity building" activities that enhances the capacity of a direct service organization.

CAPACITY BUILDING

DIRECT SERVICE

CORPS
MEMBER

AFTERSCHOOL
ORGANIZATION

AFTERSCHOOL
PARTICIPANTS

AFTERSCHOOL
ORGANIZATION

CORPS
MEMBER

AFTERSCHOOL
PARTICIPANTS

CAPACITY BUILDING OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES	DIRECT SERVICE OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES
• Creation of guidelines and procedures to meet high-quality program standards • Increased financial resources leveraged (cash or in-kind) • Additional types of services offered as a result of capacity building • Increase in the number of new youth that receive services • Improve organization's capacity, quality and/or effectiveness • Improved systems or business processes • Increased number of volunteers / caring adults supporting program • Community partnerships created and/or strengthened	**Academic Outcomes** • Increased academic achievement/Improved grades • Math and science/STEM gains • Reading gains/literacy **Youth Engagement Outcomes** • Improved school attendance • Improved academic engagement, motivation, interest and/or enthusiasm for learning • Changes in attitude toward learning **Social and Emotional Outcomes** • Improved social and emotional development • Improved social skills and Interpersonal behavior • Enhanced self-efficacy **Other Positive Skills and Outcomes** • Development of 21st century skills • Improved health & wellness + food access • Improved work habits • Increased parental engagement • Increases in the 40 developmental assets • Prevention and reduction of misconduct and risky behaviors • Reduction in crime and juvenile delinquency • Youth job readiness career exploration

THEORY OF CHANGE
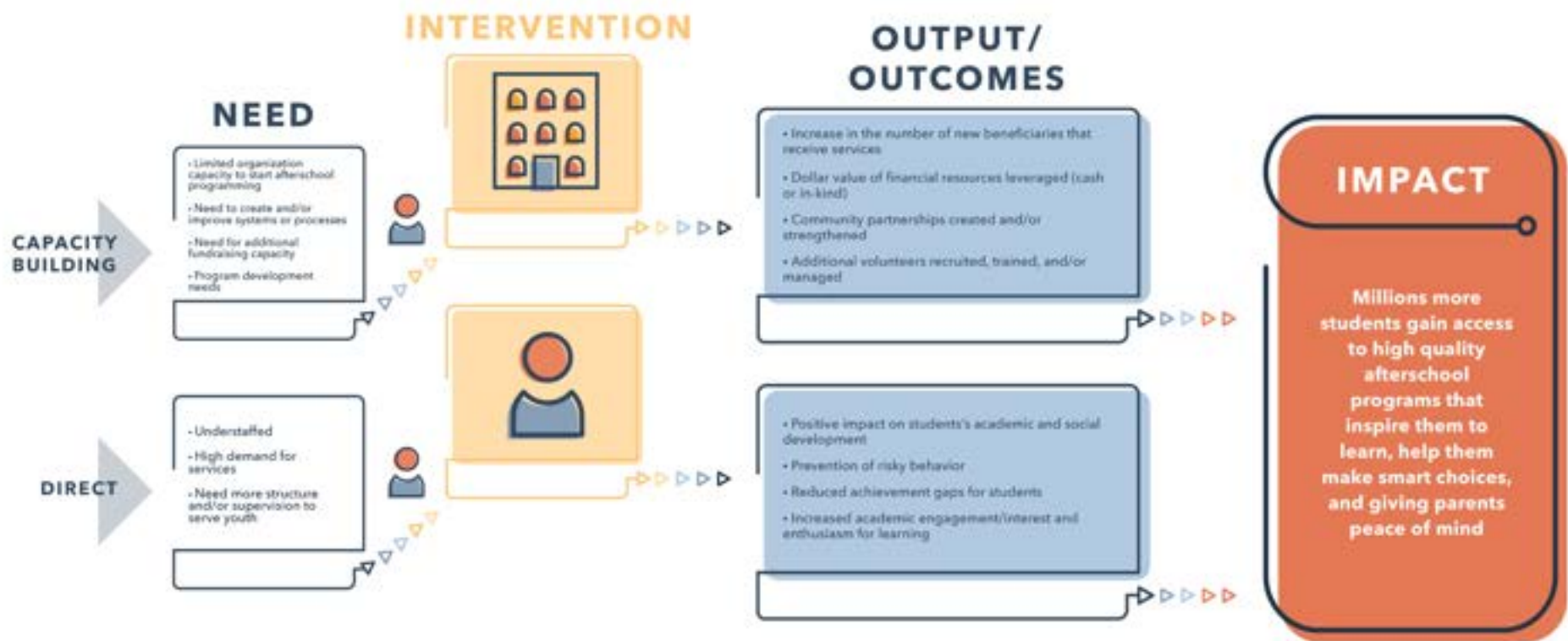
MEASURING

Now that you have identified your desired goals by defining the impact, how will you measure and track success?

Service year programs often develop and administer their own pre- and post-program surveys based on research-based resources to measure their impact. Additionally, many of the programs researched for this toolkit were funded by AmeriCorps and, therefore, many used the AmeriCorps performance measures which includes instructions on how to calculate and collect data for each measure. For your convenience, we have provided a list of common AmeriCorps performance measures utilized by AmeriCorps funded afterschool service year programs and some additional resources for identifying and selecting measurement tools.

MEASURING TOOLS	
This is a list of relevant outputs and outcomes from the national performance measures set by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)	This list provides you links to existing tools and resources to measure positive youth outcomes and/or organizational capacity outcomes.

USE ME!

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In this step, there are a few key decisions to consider:

- Service Year Corps Member Activities - What Intervention?
- Single-site or Multi-site Structure?
- Full-time or Part-Time Positions?

### SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER ACTIVITIES - WHAT INTERVENTION?

What will service year corps members do to address the identified need? Focusing first on the impact you want to have, helps better ensure service year activities are linked to the desired outcomes. Now that you have determined your goals, you can decide what specific activities the service year corps members will participate in. What are the most effective set of activities that service year corps members deliver? What interventions will they provide to meet the defined need and achieve the stated goals?

A foundational component of outcomes stems from service year corps members being focused on evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions that are common in high-quality afterschool programs and/or designed to build organizational capacity and sustainability. Evidence for the intervention (service year activities) could be supported by: documented stories of success, research studies, performance data, or by describing a successful program model being replicated that is making significant community impact.

Consider the following examples of service year corps member interventions associated with the outcomes noted earlier. Determine which strategy is best to address your need and close the opportunity gap. This list is not exhaustive and gives an idea of the type of intervention activities associated with the outcomes you are looking to achieve.

SAMPLE CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES
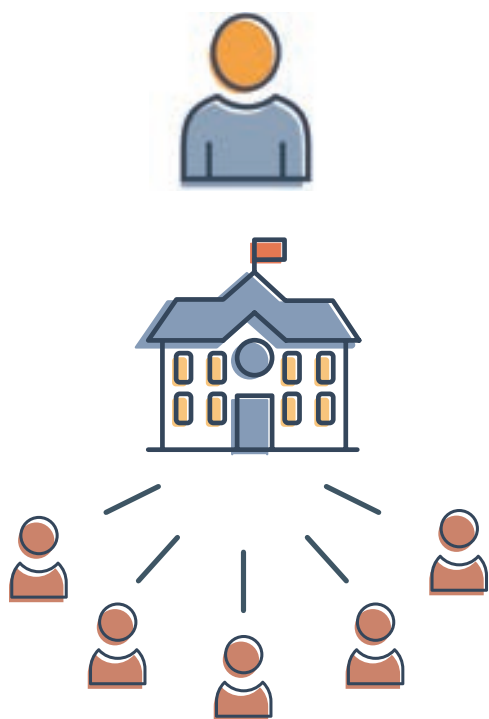
- Develop collaborative community-school afterschool program partnerships, relationship management systems, and systems of communication

- Build an afterschool program participant alumni engagement system

- Develop systems, toolkits, and resources for existing or new program development

- Gather and analyze participant feedback, assessments, and evaluations to guide the development of training, curricula, and projects that fully meet participants' needs and interests

- Create and write original enrichment curriculum

- Create systems for sustainable volunteer recruitment and management

- Recruit, train, and/or manage volunteers

- Fundraising and resource development: grant writing, prospecting, funder relations

- Create policies and procedures that increase program or organizational effectiveness

- Create publicity and outreach materials

- Develop a website for the afterschool program or network

- Help program or network assess and build a process of quality improvement and system building

- Develop resources and assessments that support parents of youth participants and enhance parental engagement strategies

SAMPLE DIRECT SERVICE ACTIVITIES
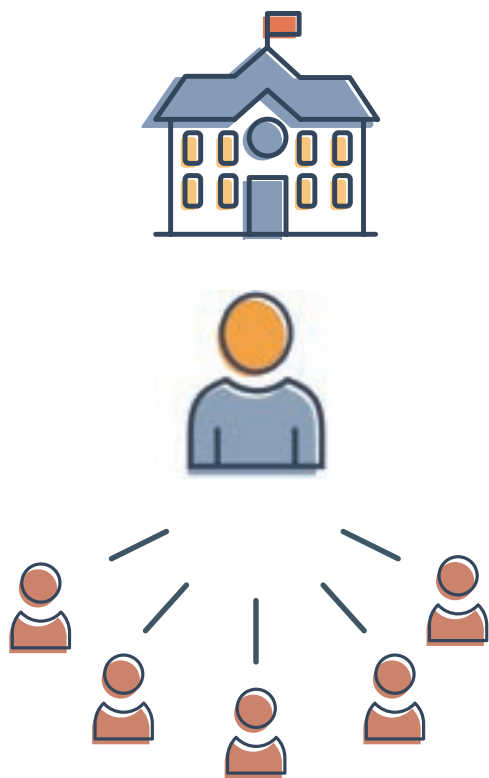
Academic Activities

- Tutor youth individually or in small groups, helping them to work on a particular skill such as reading, math, or English language skills

- Test preparation/study skills instruction and activities designed to prepare students for standardized achievement tests or to teach them study skills

- Curriculum development/lesson planning/program design

Youth Engagement Activities

- Help youth work on homework assignments

- Plan and implement afterschool programming and/or full day summer learning programs

- Engage youth in service and service learning projects

- Facilitate S.M.A.R.T. goal setting with youth

- Track school progress for youth and coordinate with school administration, teachers and parents

SAMPLE DIRECT SERVICE ACTIVITIES CONT'D

Social and Emotional Activities

- Lead workshops on social and emotional enrichment and life skills

- Design and/or lead cultural awareness clubs/projects that develop cultural, religious, or ethnic awareness, understanding, or identity

- Plan and deliver activities that promote higher order skill development, such as problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, teamwork, goal setting and communication

Other Positive Skills and Outcomes Activities

- Implement college- and career-readiness programs for students

- Lead computer skill-building activities

- Teach hands-on activities

- Develop/run interest-based clubs, i.e. STEM, lego robotics, etc.

- Lead fitness/exercise class and/or activities targeting general physical fitness/strength

- Mentoring

- Conduct periodic focus groups with residents and parents to determine interest and need

- Facilitate parent and community outreach and orientation to program to help them be more active and engaged in the afterschool program

- Support curriculum development

Where can I find information about what makes a high-quality afterschool program or evidence to support the corps members interventions?

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

Afterschool Impacts Database

Afterschool Program Quality and Student Outcomes: Reflections on Positive Key Findings on Learning and Development from Recent Research

Afterschool Training Toolkit

Building and Managing Quality Programs

Common Practices in High Functioning Afterschool Programs

Evidence Brief Effective CNCS-Funded Education Programs

Promising Practices Rating System

National Service Systematic Review and Synthesis of National Service Literature

Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs

WHAT STRUCTURE BEST SUITS YOUR PROGRAM?

Determining the best model for delivering service will have a significant impact on your program structure, corps member placement, and overall impact. You may wish to directly host all service year corps members within your organization to support their direct supervision and management. Or, you may wish to place service year corps members at separate service locations (a host site) throughout the community (like schools or community youth centers) to reach a broader audience. The service year corps members may deliver their service in teams, small groups, or as individuals. Think creatively with your staff, partners, and stakeholders to determine the model that best fits your organization and how the model will best solve your identified need.

In many cases, direct service afterschool programs operate in a multi-site structure where the services for students are located in community centers or schools that they can easily access when school lets out. For example, a city's Boys and Girls Club may have programming in both their club locations and in schools or community centers. It is common for these multi-site programs to have a model with at least 2 service year corps members placed at each host site to enable them to work in teams and support each other. Capacity building service year corps members are often placed at the program's headquarters to work on resource development, volunteer management, and/or partnership development.

WHAT WILL BE THE REQUIRED LENGTH OF SERVICE: FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME SERVICE?

Service years usually last for approximately 12 months, though some may go as long as 24 months. To be certified on ServiceYear.org, each position must have a start and end date and require at least 32 hours of service per week as part of a full-time commitment. Other program activities such as training, education, planning/prep and team activities may make up the remainder of the hours for a full-time program. (Note: there is an exception to the hours requirement for AmeriCorps programs and in some other instances, which are described in the Certification Criteria).

Afterschool programs operating full-time service year programs have members serving in schools during the school day, either tutoring in the classroom or providing mentoring and other academic support. As many afterschool programs operate from approximately 3:00 to 6:00 pm, full-time service year corps members also plan activities during the day before leading programs with youth during the afterschool hours. Or, they engage in other activities such as supporting parent engagement or community outreach. The program may also operate summer learning programs to engage service year corps members in a full-time commitment. Additionally, corps members may split their time between capacity building and direct service.

There are a number of direct service programs that run AmeriCorps programs that are part-time and only operate from 3:00 to 6:00 pm every day after school during the school year. While this may or may not meet Service Year Alliance's criteria for a full-time commitment, a part-time position may be the best option to meet your defined need.

Service Year Alliance's online platform, ServiceYear.org, only includes positions that are deemed to have the characteristics of a service year position. If your organization is not part of AmeriCorps, your positions will need to be certified. Take a look at the criteria to create a certified service year position.

FINALIZE SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

STEP 5: FINALIZE SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

A well defined position description is essential for a successful service year program to set clear expectations and to align the program needs with the best-suited candidates. At a minimum, your position descriptions should define the duties and responsibilities, qualifications, and skills gained.

USE THIS!

MAKE THE CASE

STEP 6: MAKE THE CASE

Rallying stakeholders is an important step in gaining the support needed to launch a service year program. Now that you have an outline for your program and position description, you are ready to rally your stakeholders. Consider your potential stakeholders, such as your organization's upper management and board members, funders, community and implementation partners, and your target population. Define how each of these audiences will be affected by the program, and how their support will affect its outcomes.

Who is directly affected by the need? How many people are directly affected? How severe is this problem? What makes this a compelling need? What will happen if you do nothing?

Here are a few key messages that could help design a meaningful case to persuade key audiences to support the program.

> AmeriCorps members are essential to Y.O.U! It's fair to say that without our 27 corps members, our work at Y.O.U. may look vastly different. As the AmeriCorps program touches all we do, AmeriCorps members are essential to our ability to deliver high quality programs in service of our mission! We are so thankful to have corps members here!

From Youth & Opportunity United

Despite the prevalence of afterschool programs throughout our communities, according to the Afterschool Alliance and the America After 3pm report, there remains a staggering 19.4 million kids who would be enrolled in an afterschool program if it were available to them. This means that millions of students are left alone and unsupervised from 3:00 to 6:00 pm everyday. Afterschool providers struggle to meet this demand without the human resources to expand high-quality programming in more locations or to diversify the kinds of programming that can be offered to young learners of all backgrounds.

Service year corps members are a cost-effective strategy to increase program capacity, reach more students and families, deliver effective programming and connect kids to more positive adult influence while cultivating future community leaders and creating a pipeline for post-secondary opportunities. When afterschool programs include service year corps members as part of their team, youth being served become exposed to a new option to pursue after high school. They come to understand that service years are opportunities to serve their communities and contribute to the program that was so important in their own learning experience. Additionally, the youth being served learn about a service year as a pathway towards college or career.

While this toolkit is designed to show you why service years are a good strategy for afterschool programs and networks, we also want to leave you with additional resources that make the case for why access to more afterschool programs is needed.

Links:

This is Afterschool

Afterschool Programs Make a Difference: Findings From the Harvard Family Research Project

 21st Century Community Learning Centers Inspiring Learning. Supporting Families. Earning Results

"Our service year program combines the power of national service with local community partners through the committed service of full-time AmeriCorps members. Youth Achievement AmeriCorps members provide support to low-income children and families through early literacy programming, literacy tutoring and enrichment, math tutoring and STEM engagement. We have seen improved academic scores. These results would not be possible without the committed involvement of their AmeriCorps members."

United Way of East Central Iowa
Youth Achievement AmeriCorps

CREATE AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

STEP SEVEN: CREATE AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Up to this point, we helped you design your service year program. Now, you will need to create an implementation plan that takes your design and builds a plan to execute. That requires you to download the *Creating a New Program Toolkit* as described in STEP 1. You can start filling in the information you learned from this toolkit and start planning your program. The remaining components of this toolkit are things to consider as you plan for the success of the afterschool service year program.

FUNDRAISING RESOURCES AND BUDGETING

Service Year Alliance knows that one of the main barriers to starting a service year program is developing a funding strategy to build, create, and sustain a service year program. The first step is to build a budget for your service year program. The budget size of programs varies based on the program model and structure. The primary thing to consider in creating a budget is what do you need to implement a high quality program and to support your program activities? Consider: financial, instructional, training, staff and service year corps member resources. Once you have a sense of how much your program will cost, you can seek funding for those costs.

As you determine funding needs, know that most programs have a combination of many funding sources. The most common sources of funding for service year programs are: AmeriCorps funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), non-CNCS federal funds, state funding, school budgets, corporate and philanthropic funding, local government funding, fee-for-service revenue, and individual donations. While AmeriCorps is one of the largest funding source for service year programs, an organization can use existing forms of funding or new grants to fund your service year program. Another common source of funds of afterschool

programs is to charge the host sites a set fee for each service year corps member placed at that site. This strategy supports funding needs and provides the incentive to invest in the development and supervision of service year corps members. We suggest diversifying your funding to ensure sustainability.

Looking for funding sources can be daunting. The Afterschool Alliance has collected a list of federal, state, local, and private funding sources that could fund the service year program costs. Service Year Alliance also has a Funding Resources For Education Service Year Programs that provides additional suggestions.

TIMELINE

Service year programs in afterschool settings typically follow a school-year timeline with members beginning at the end of August and completing their term the following summer. This timeline provides you a general sense of the service year corps member recruitment, selection, and year of service cycle. There are major components to launching a service year program that must be in place before this process begins - the main components being a well defined program model and secured funding.

1-2 MONTHS	6-12 MONTHS		AT LEAST 3 MONTHS	9-12 MONTHS
• Design Program	• Secure Funding • Plan Implementation	FUNDS SECURED	• Recruit & Select Corps Members • Prepare Sites	Service Year Starts!
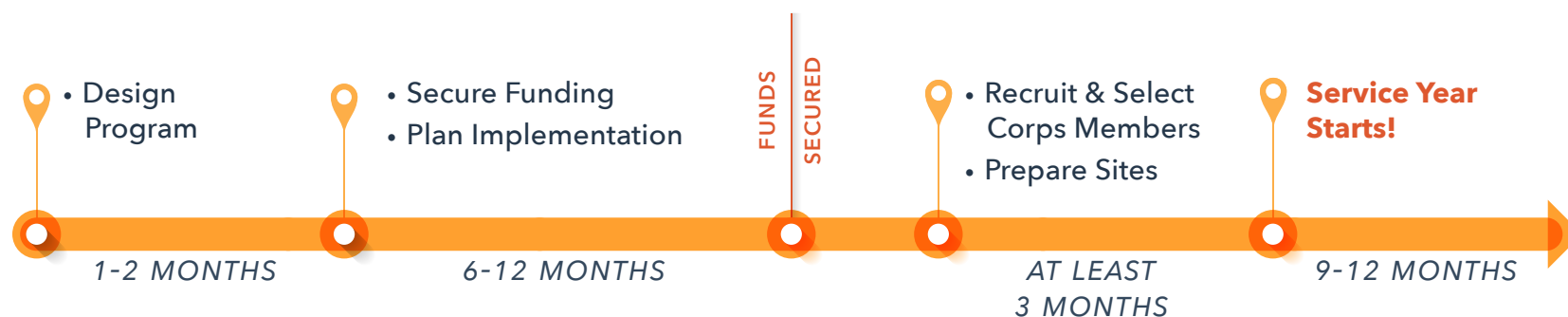
SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER EXPERIENCE: ON-BOARDING, TRAINING, AND TRANSITION PLAN

Service year corps member development is a vital element of running a successful service year program. In order for your program to have a positive impact in meeting the needs of your organization, as well as being a valuable experience for your service year corps members, you must commit to developing the service year corps member's skills and experience during their service term. It's important to outline an orientation session and ongoing dedicated skill development trainings throughout the service term.

As they begin their service year, corps members need to be trained in the specific interventions they will implement with youth or the organizational capacity building work. An orientation is integral to ensuring that service year corps members are fully prepared to carry out programmatic activities. They also need to be trained on the afterschool program operations and guidelines, on the community and the population they will serve, and on the requirements they need to fulfill as service year corps members. Most programs will begin the service year with a 1-2 week orientation training to provide all of this needed information.

Critical to member retention and success are opportunities for training and professional development throughout the year. Many programs will have weekly or monthly training days. This type of yearlong training and professional development is an important component for the success of a service year program, as members need to understand their contributions to youth and/or organizational outcomes in a meaningful way. They also need to understand that the program is committed to their experience and their personal and professional development.

Finally, preparing your service year corps member for their next steps after service is crucial to ensuring a meaningful and transformative experience. Helping service year corps members

Connect your corps members to the service year community!

All organizations with a certified position can enroll their service year corps members on ServiceYear.org. This allows Service Year Alliance to connect them to resources, news, and opportunities. Enrolled corps members can add stories and photos about their experiences, to share on their profile and on social media. You can exit your enrolled corps members into our alum community upon successful completion of service.

plan their transition and reflect on the personal and professional growth helps them identify choices for what comes next. Whether the service year corps member is continuing their education, establishing a career, and/or continuing in service, it's necessary to help identify resources and strategies to help them take their next steps. Many service year programs can also help to connect service year corps members with opportunities to receive specific credentials or receive certain certificates.

SAMPLE TRAINING TOPICS FOR CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Lead A Strong Organization	Build Skills and Networks	Support Transition to the Next Step
Orientation sets the tone for the service year.	As the program moves through the service year, additional development opportunities are a way to allow members to deepen the knowledge and skills they've already gained, learn new skills, and earn certifications or licenses (where appropriate and relevant).	Preparing service year corps members for their next steps is a critical step in translating their service year into future career and education pathways.

USE THESE!

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

A critical step to prepare for implementation is to consider a staffing structure. Who will supervisor the members? What do you need to do to gain the support and buy-in from staff to ensure an understanding of the uniqueness of service year corps members?

Afterschool programs and networks currently operating service year programs emphasized how important it is to have full staff support for the service year program as well as a clear understanding of what makes service year corps members unique in what they provide and what they need to be supported. Many expressed that support needs to come from the top in order to maintain a successful service year program, the executive director or top-level program leader must make his or her commitment to the program clear to the entire team. Regardless of whether or not they have direct supervisor responsibilities, all staff members in a program must be committed to supporting service year members as key team players, as critical contributors to the organization's outcomes and as future public leaders.

In the multi-site structure described previously, where there are multiple host sites, there is typically a site supervisor at each host site. These host site supervisors are then typically supported by a program staff member responsible for overseeing the whole program, designing and facilitating training for the cohort of members, checking-in with host site supervisors and service year corps members on a regular basis, and conducting site visits. As one program leader expressed, running a multi-site and multi-member service year program requires a significant amount of human resources to support service year corps members effectively; and, it is important for organizations to recognize this when starting this type of multi-site model.

Having a well established supervisor description as well as a host site agreement or memorandum of understanding to formalize a partnership and clearly define roles is a required practice by service year programs.

TIPS FROM THE FIELD

While this entire toolkit is informed by insights from practitioners in the field, it's important to note specific challenges that current program staff and experts listed as things you might encounter as you implement a service year program. Together, we worked to identify recommendations and strategies to overcome common challenges.

USE THIS! →

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Service Year Alliance is grateful to the following networks and organizations that participated through interviews and/or in-person gatherings to share the best practices and models in service year afterschool programs:

Afterschool Alliance, Aspire! Afterschool Learning, ESC Consulting, Higher Achievement, Iowa Commission on Volunteering and Service, Maine Statewide Afterschool Work, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Oregon ASK, Partners for After School Success AmeriCorps, Serve Indiana, United Way of East Central Iowa, Wisconsin Afterschool Network, and Youth & Opportunity United. We would also like to thank all the programs featured in this toolkit. All the networks and organizations mentioned work tirelessly to bring top-notch out-of-school education to students across the United States and deliver programs that are also beneficial to the service year corps member.

Service Year Alliance is working to make a year of paid, full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. A service year before, during, or after college gives young people the chance to transform their lives, make an impact in their community, and become the active citizens and leaders our nation needs. Expanding service years has the power to revitalize cities, uplift and educate children at risk, and empower communities struggling with poverty. It can unite the most diverse nation in history, binding people of different backgrounds through common cause.

Find Us Online: ServiceYear.org

Find Us on Twitter: @ServiceYear

Find Us on Facebook: Facebook.com/ServiceYear

VISION

Every year, one million young Americans engaged in a service year, solving important problems while transforming their own lives.

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

SERVICEYEAR.ORG

Access to and presence on a state-of-the-art online marketplace and resource hub

NATIONAL RECRUITMENT, AWARENESS, AND CORPS MEMBER SUPPORT

Access to and participation in a national campaign to inspire a generation to serve, rewards for their service, and resources to support corps members during and after their service

GROW SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMS

Access to best practices, knowledge sharing and awards to grow and improve your existing programs and help create new ones

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Support from the Washington, DC policy operation, grassroots movement across the country, and an alliance of influential Americans

CAPACITY BUILDING AMERICORPS NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has a Performance Measurement framework that provides a common focal point for CNCS' work across all programs and initiatives. Below are a sample of national outputs and outcomes that align with capacity building work that is most associated with afterschool service year programs.

Click here to learn more about these national measure or CNCS' instructions on how to calculate, measure, and collect data for each measure.

OUTPUTS

- Number of community volunteers recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or National Service Participants.

- Number of community volunteers managed by CNCS-supported organizations or National Service Participants.

- Number of organizations that received capacity building services from CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Number of staff and community volunteers that received training (of one or more types) as a result of capacity building services from CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Number of organizations that completed a community assessment identifying goals and recommendations with the assistance of CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were managed by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

OUTCOMES

- Number of organizations implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Number of organizations reporting that capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more efficient.

- Number organizations reporting that capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more effective.

- Number of new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancements to existing systems and business processes put in place as a result of capacity building services.

- Number of additional activities completed and/or program outputs produced by the program as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants

- Number or organizations that have experienced an increase in requests for their programs and services as a results of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Number of additional types of services offered by organizations as a results of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants in the focus areas.

- Dollar value of cash resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Dollar value of in-kind resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.

- Number of new beneficiaries that received services as a result of capacity building efforts

- Number of new beneficiaries from one or more targeted or underserved populations (counts by target population, e.g., racial or ethnic group) that received services as a result of capacity building efforts

DIRECT SERVICE AMERICORPS NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has a Performance Measurement framework that provides a common focal point for CNCS' work across all programs and initiatives. Below are a sample of national outputs and outcomes that align with direct service activities most associated with afterschool service year programs.

Click here to learn more about these national measure or CNCS' instructions on how to calculate, measure, and collect data for each measure.

OUTPUTS

- Number of economically disadvantaged students or students with special/exceptional needs who start in a CNCS-supported education program.

- Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches or youth with special or exceptional needs/mentor matches that are commenced by the CNCS-supported education program.

OUTCOMES

- Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.

- Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.

- Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills

- Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of numeracy (math) skills.

- Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement (attitudes).

- Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement (behaviors).

- Number of students with improved academic performance in core academic subjects other than literacy or math.

TOOLS FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES: A RESOURCE LIST

AFTERSCHOOL OUTCOME MEASURE ONLINE TOOLBOX

The Afterschool Outcome Measures Online Toolbox provides afterschool and summer programs with a means to measure program quality and student outcomes using scales that have well-established reliability and validity.

EVERY HOUR COUNTS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The Every Hour Counts Measurement Framework defines a small set of system, program, and youth level outcomes. The Measurement Framework provides a variety of measurement tasks that range from reviewing data and documents to conducting surveys

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTION - TOOLS CHART

The charts are published to assist educators and families in becoming informed consumers who can select academic and behavioral progress monitoring tools and interventions that best meet their individual needs.

PARTNERSHIP FOR AFTER SCHOOL EDUCATION (PASE) AFTERSCHOOL YOUTH OUTCOMES INVENTORY

This guide includes suggested measurement tools for collecting and analyzing data. These suggestions represent tools which can be customized or adapted to suit the assessment goals of a program and implemented internally without the assistance of an independent evaluator.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENT TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides implementers of youth programming a variety of references, resources, and tools on how to use a positive youth development (PYD) approach for evaluating youth-focused programming.

A GUIDE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

This guide provides a landscape of existing (publicly available) Organizational Capacity Assessment tools and outlines best practices for using these tools to support or launch the larger undertaking of organizational capacity development.

LEAD A STRONG ORIENTATION

Orientation sets the tone for your corps members service year. Here are suggested discussion topics you should cover during the corps member orientation process. This list is not all-inclusive, but it brings up many items recommended by current afterschool service year programs.

BACKGROUND ON ORGANIZATION

Mission and History

Vision/Theory of Change/Strategic Plan

Staff and responsibilities (org chart)

List of Board Members, relevant staff contacts and partner organizations

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Discuss the program mission, philosophy, and unique features of the position

Identify and discuss priorities for the next three months, focusing on project goals

Review best practices in high-quality afterschool programs and/or exemplary program standards

Discuss specific standards of performance/ expectations

Identify present level of skill and understanding of all phases of job assignments

Identify people who might be helpful in learning skills and routines

Review licensing regulations and requirements

Review requirements for necessary certification: first aid, CPR, driver certification, college units

Discuss career development opportunities and training

How do we know success - share metrics that will be tracked from service activities

History, demographics, and relevant information about the population and communities with which corps members will work

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY

Provide information on geographic, social, and political aspects of the community

Provide information about other community programs and services

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY CONT'D

Arrange introductions to staff involved in interagency and school district partnerships

Get to know their supervisor

Review supervisor role and expectations

Understanding of place - your role within the organization as well as community; big picture

CORPS MEMBER OVERVIEW

Intro to National Service - History of National Service

Review position description

Set goals for the year

Share a program calendar of in-service touch points for the rest of the year

Give corps members a framework to record important data about their service activities

AmeriCorps program regulation requirements, if applicable

WORKPLACE 101

Administration and logistics

Program policies/ procedures

Timeliness

Professionalism

Workplace norms/ culture

Professional office skills

DIRECT SERVICE 101

See "build skills" section for suggested topics that you might also want to cover during orientation

CAPACITY BUILDING 101

See "build skills" section for suggested topics that you might also want to cover during orientation.

SURVIVING YOUR SERVICE YEAR SERIES

Budgeting

Commuting

Lifestyle

Health & Wellness

Relocation & Housing

Student Loans

BUILD SKILLS AND NETWORKS

The following are suggested discussion topics you should cover over the course of the year to allow service year corps members to deepen their knowledge and skills already gained, learn new skills, and earn certifications or licenses (where appropriate and relevant). Some of the topics noted here may also be great for orientation. This list is not all-inclusive, but it brings up many items recommended by current afterschool service year programs. It is also recommended that you revisit basic orientation & professional skills 3-4 months into the year as a refresher. Identify any training needs or requests from your service year corps member to help them be successful in their service as well as in their post-service goals beyond the topics noted below.

TRANSLATING SERVICE YEAR SKILLS 101

Post-Service Year Preparation Checklist
Translating Service Year Skills

AFTERSCHOOL OVERVIEW ESSENTIALS

Afterschool 101- general literacy on topic area

Afterschool research/statistics – how participation makes a difference for youth

Overview of afterschool programs and services - the ecosystem

Overview on the impact of afterschool programs

Understanding school systems and academic standards

Youth development 101- theoretical underpinning and historical context

Youth Work 101—relationship building & facilitating groups

Exposure to education system-schools, teachers, school board, instructional leads etc

DIRECT SERVICE

21st century skills and activities that develop them

Behavior management

Child development: ages and stages of child developmental characteristics and programming implications

How to cultivate supportive relations between youth and adults

Literacy tutoring strategies & best practices/review of tutoring session outline

DIRECT SERVICE CONT'D

Positive youth development / 40 developmental assets

Project-based learning model

Respecting the school culture

School age curricular framework

Setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries with youth

Social emotional learning – what it is, why it is important, how to build skills through goal-setting and other activities

Advanced youth development training

Deepening our practice: Classroom management 'good rapport with kids'

Specific skill certification - micro skills within the position

"Critical Friends Group" coaching training

CAPACITY BUILDING

Volunteer recruitment and management strategies

Fundraising 101

Partnership building strategies

Organizational capacity - what is it? Why is it important?

OTHER

Team building

Trauma Informed care

Diversity / cultural competency

Communities of practice - opportunity to address challenges & ask questions

Conflict resolution

Create & track professional development portfolio

Credentials - CPR / first aid, mandated reporting

Guide service year corps members to set short term and long term goals for their service year and for their personal and professional life beyond service

SUPPORT TRANSITION TO THE NEXT STEP

Here are suggested discussion topics you should cover to prepare your service year corps members for their next steps as they translate their service year into future career and education pathways. Preparing your service year corps members for their next steps after their service year starts the moment their service year begins. It's important to consider the topics listed here you can start as soon as the first 3 months.

• Importance of your service and communicating it

• Relating your experience to future work

• Coach service year corps members on elevator pitches about your organization and their service.

• Match your service year corps member with a mentor who will support them during service and advice on next-steps.

• Create opportunities to attend career/job fairs

• Create opportunities for your service year corps members to network with potential professional connections

• Cultivating professional relationships (future references) e.g. don't anger your site supervisor

• How to translate a service year for your resume

• Your Education Award-How it works (if applicable)

• Intro to institutions that match Education Award (if applicable)

• Informational Interviews 101

• Mock Interviews

• Networking, it's who you know: Leveraging professional connections from service yearin services as future references or resources

• Pathways to higher education - undergraduate or graduate school

• Resume writing

• "Capstone project" - leave knowing how to plan & implement a program

• Welcome to the alumni network

CHALLENGES YOU MIGHT FACE & SOLUTIONS TO MITIGATE THEM

Below are a number of challenges that current program staff and experts listed as things you might encounter as you implement a service year program. Service Year Alliance has organized them into themes. Included is a handful of recommendations and strategies current practitioners use to overcome these challenges. Additionally, we hope as you read this toolkit that you discovered additional strategies that also directly address these challenges.

SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION	
Challenges	Solutions
• Recruitment and retention of corps members • Low cost of living stipend for service year members • Lack of awareness and lack of candidates • Expectations of programs not aligned with expectations of members • Training needs to support corps members - especially specific & sensitive topics	• Develop branding tools • Cultivate an esprit de corps • Launch an educational and awareness campaign • Develop a communication campaign to increase awareness & support for service • Develop data driven recruitment pipelines • Offer a credential tied to their service year • Secure corps member perks such as transportation passes, subsidy /benefit, retail discounts, etc. • Secure affordable housing partnerships • Develop a mentoring buddy system • Offer living stipends to match cost of living • Careful vetting needed to align the right candidates with position

HOST SITES

Challenges	Solutions
• Finding host sites • Misconceptions of host sites • Lack of understanding of what corps members can and cannot do	• Develop a strong host site selection process • Identify high capacity organizations that are ready to expand • Create a strong host site onboarding process

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & BUY-IN

Challenges	Solutions
• Sustained funding support • Lack of capacity of an organization • Programs don't want to invest in a member for just one year • Insufficient staff and buy-in to manage program & support members • Lack of integration to our overall organization • Lack of leadership buy-in	• Conduct organizational readiness assessments • Gather best practices • Build a continuity of service plan around a service year model to plan for corps member transitions • Network and learn from other programs • Create a diversified & blended funding base • Leverage existing resources and networks • Develop public / private partnership (corporate or foundation) • Build organizational capacity • AmeriCorps /service alumni crowdsource fundraising & major donor solicitations • Develop a sustainability committee

APPENDIX

PROGRAM QUALITY & FIDELITY

Challenges	Solutions
• Ensuring overall quality • Program services not aligned with identified need • Filling time for a full time member - what do they do during the school day? • Ensuring quality experiences for members and quality program for youth	• Design a high quality training for corps members • Develop cadre of quality trainers / TA providers • Research evidence based practices • Provide regular feedback and coaching to service year corps members • Pool resources / stipends for corps member development

GENERAL

Challenges	Solutions
• Competition among local programs • Establishing data collection systems to measure impact	• Engage faith based organizations • Develop national partnerships • Build a strong alumni network • Form strong collaborative partnerships with local programs • Garner advocacy & public support / endorsement • Form relationships with community leaders (beyond political) • Partner with related & new national networks • Cultivate service champions & high profile supporters • Establish data sharing agreements with schools that enable them to use school assessment data to measure youth academic outcomes

SAMPLE SERVICE YEAR CORPS MEMBER
POSITION DESCRIPTION

About the Organization

Enter description about your program/organization.

About the Position

Position Title: Term of Service Start Date:

Service Location: Term of Service End Date:

Service year corps members complete an intensive commitment and make a substantial impact in the life of youth. You will be helping the nation address one of its greatest challenges-closing the achievement gap. You will be working with young people to inspire them to learn, help them make smart choices, and equip them with the skills needed to achieve their dreams. You'll serve students, schools and communities by providing hands-on service, tutoring, and academic support before school, afterschool, weekends, and during school breaks.

What You'll Do - Corps Member Responsibilities

You'll serve students, schools and communities. During your service year, you will fulfil the following responsibilities:

- List out activities

What You'll Get - Compensation & Benefits

This is an opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service.It's an extraordinary year that transforms your life and your community. You'll gain valuable skills and knowledge that will accelerate your career and education. It's not your typical path; it's an experience for A Better You. A Greater Us.

Career and Education Opportunities

- Access to online resource center and virtual career fairs
- Networking opportunities
- ENTER INFO HERE

Skills and Training

- Leadership training and development
- Extensive training in the field of afterschool and youth development
- Project management and communication skills
- ENTER INFO HERE

Benefits

- Living Stipend
- ENTER LIST OF BENEFITS HERE

Qualifications & Requirements

Eligibility

- At minimum members must be high school graduates, GED recipients, or working on attaining a high school diploma or GED during their term of service
- Agree to a criminal background check
- ENTER REQUIREMENTS HERE

Dedication to positive youth outcomes

- Experience with children, and/or a desire to learn more about positive youth development
- Strong language and communication skills
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with children's families
- Willingness to learn about session implementation and planning
- Willingness to implement high-quality afterschool standards and program model with integrity

Commitment to service

- Community service experience and/ or a desire to serve in the community
- Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to fulfill a yearlong service year commitment
- Enthusiastic and positive attitude toward helping others

Professionalism

- Ability to work well on a team to collaborate, communicate, and problem solve
- Desire to seek opportunities for self and team growth
- Willingness to receive and provide feedback in an effort to improve quality of one's service
- Availability, dependability, and willingness to be flexible in different contexts, such as in training, scheduling, in the classroom, with unexpected changes
- Professionalism and good judgment in relating to peers, children, partners, and families