

Volunteer Maryland Peer Leader Position Description

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

Volunteer Maryland (VM), an AmeriCorps program of the Governor's Office, works to build stronger communities by developing programs that meet critical needs in the areas of disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans' services. As service leaders, Peer Leaders provide frontline support to the Volunteer Maryland Coordinators at their Service Sites as well as work with Volunteer Maryland staff to meet program objectives.

Peer Leaders play a key role in the success of each VM service class, and have access to a wide array of service and leadership opportunities during the year. As AmeriCorps members, the Peer Leaders offer unique perspectives and resources to each VM partnership around the state and to the program as a whole.

This is an 11 month, full-time (40 hours/week) position as a member of the Volunteer Maryland (VM) AmeriCorps program. The Peer Leader service year will begin on September 9, 2015 and conclude on August 10, 2016; Volunteer Maryland Peer Leaders are expected to complete 1,772 hours of service during the term.

BENEFITS:

As AmeriCorps members, Peer Leaders receive a living stipend of \$17,500, a post-service educational benefit of \$5,645, student loan deferment, mileage reimbursement, professional development, and health insurance if they are not already covered. They may also qualify for a child care allowance. Other benefits include valuable networking opportunities, working with a dedicated team of AmeriCorps members and staff, and making a real difference throughout Maryland.

DUTIES:

Member and Site Support:

- Facilitate Volunteer Maryland Coordinator gatherings (e.g., meetings, service projects, networking opportunities) to foster class identity and unity.
- Attend site visits (as requested by VM's Program Manager) to assess progress of site partnerships.
- Seek out and share local resources to assist in the development of stronger volunteer and service-learning programs at the Service Sites and to benefit the Peer Leader host site.
- Assist with VM Coordinators' and Service Sites' pre-service and in-service training; work with Volunteer Maryland staff to prepare and facilitate in-service trainings; and assist with on-site training, as requested.
- Assist with class retreat, service project, Destination AmeriCorps and/or finale—identify sites, organize logistics, prepare materials, solicit in-kind donations, etc.

VM Marketing and Outreach:

- Participate in outreach to potential sites and members—activities may include writing articles for publication, developing outreach materials, public speaking, participation in service/job fairs, Internet research, networking, etc.
- Participate in site and member selection—activities may include reviewing site applications, site visits, observing member interviews, etc.
- Build VM's network—lead and co-facilitate an annual networking event for AmeriCorps members in Maryland, promote VM at local and national events, visit other AmeriCorps programs.

Other duties:

- Participate in all VM activities (as appropriate), including organizational development, training and technical assistance for members, sites, and other partners, networking and outreach, and public relations.
- Create Peer Leader work plan, complete all VM evaluation materials and reflection exercises, attend all class training days and service projects.
- Submit weekly progress reports on networking, partnership support, and resource development activities.
- Provide weekly blog posts focusing on Volunteer Maryland Coordinator highlights and Peer Leader experience.
- Create monthly service class newsletter.
- Attend weekly meetings at VMHQ.
- Provide four to eight hours of direct service or host site service per week.
- Support Peer Leader host site as necessary. (Host site agreements are negotiated at the beginning of the service year.)
- Peer Leaders may be assigned other program duties during the course of the service year by the VM Director.

Note: Peer Leaders will not be allowed to perform duties that violate the AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities or fall outside of the program goals

SELECTION PROCESS:

To participate in Volunteer Maryland, applicants must submit a written application. Staff will review the application, with special emphasis placed on the writing sample, invite the applicant to interview if appropriate, conduct two reference checks, and complete a criminal background investigation. Decisions will be made after all candidates have been interviewed. After an applicant has been tentatively accepted, the three-part criminal history check will be initiated and appropriate paperwork will be sent. Individuals will not be allowed to start service until all paperwork is received by the program, the NSOPR check is received, and fingerprints are submitted to the Maryland CJIS Central Repository and the designated agencies of any other states where the individual resided.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS:

To serve as a Volunteer Maryland Peer Leader, an individual must be at least 17 years of age; have a high school diploma or GED; be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien; pass a national service criminal history check of the national sex-offender registry, state repository check (Maryland and state of residence), and FBI fingerprint check; and complete pre-service training requirements. Documentation of age, education, and citizenship are due on the first day of service. Criminal history checks will be initiated before the start of service; an individual will be ineligible if s/he is required to register on the National Sex Offender Registry, has been convicted of murder, or fails to disclose any previous conviction. Other convictions or pending charges will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with program policy.

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES NECESSARY:

- Solid understanding of practices and principles of volunteer management.
- Skilled at taking initiative, problem solving, and working independently.
- Skilled at building interpersonal relationships.
- Strong verbal skills, to communicate effectively with staff, Volunteer Maryland Coordinators, and community members.
- Skilled at written communication, to develop program materials and reports.
- Committed to the concept of national service and to making a difference in his/her community.
- Basic computer literacy, to be able to produce program materials, write blog posts and newsletter articles, and submit regular reports.
- Have a private vehicle, as frequent travel to VMC sites is required throughout the year.
- Good humor, patience, and extraordinary dependability; able to respond to organizational change productively and maintain positive attitude.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:

Peer Leaders participate in several days of orientation and training which include an introduction to the goals, roles, philosophies and practices of the Support Team (Peer Leaders and staff). Service year requirements, listening and facilitation skills, conflict resolution strategies, and case study applications are also included.

In addition, VM provides approximately 20 days of training in program development, volunteer management, marketing, communication, and leadership skills for all VMCs and Peer Leaders. Training is held the first two weeks of the VMC service year, with monthly training days throughout the rest of the year. Additional training opportunities are also available throughout the year.

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION:

Peer Leaders report to VM's Director. For each of their duties, the Peer Leaders will also receive instructions and support from each VM staff member at some point during the service

year, under the Director's supervision. The Director will conduct performance evaluations, facilitate weekly team meetings, and conduct regular check-ins throughout the service year.

HOURS:

Peer Leaders are required to serve approximately 40 hours each week. Peer Leaders must be able to serve during regular business hours, 9:00 am- 5:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Some evening and weekend work may be required.

LOCATION:

Peer Leader office space is located at Volunteer Maryland's office, 301 West Preston Street, 15th floor, Baltimore, MD 21201. Additionally, VM may partner with local volunteer centers or previous Service Sites to host Peer Leaders in different regions around the state. The Peer Leader host site will provide a local office as well as a network of additional resources to strengthen the Peer Leader's service year and the VM partnerships. When partnered with a host site, the Peer Leader will either perform direct service at the host site or perform some other capacity building project for the host site for 10-20 percent of their service hours. The host site agreement will be finalized at the beginning of each service year.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the below 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 below on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-federal funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so. AmeriCorps members will not be allowed to take part in the following prohibited activities:

- Attempting to influence legislation
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials
- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization
- Providing a direct benefit to any of the following:
 - A business organized for profit
 - A labor union
 - A partisan political organization
 - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section

shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative

- An organization engaged in the religious activities described above, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities
 - Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive
 - Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
 - Such other activities as the CNCS or GOSV may prohibit
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To Apply:

Send resume, a two to three page writing sample, and a list of references to Volunteer Maryland, 301 West Preston Street, 15th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201; fax 410-333-7010 or email patrice.beverly@maryland.gov by **June 1, 2015**.

The writing sample must address the following questions:

1. Why do you want to be a part of Volunteer Maryland/AmeriCorps?
2. What experience and skills would you bring to the Peer Leader position?
3. What is your philosophy and style of leadership?