



# Assessing & Interviewing Prospective Members

Once you have successfully recruited for your position and have a pool of candidates, the process of screening, interviewing, and selection begins! Below are resources to build an equitable and efficient process to select your next AmeriCorps team member.

## Create an Equitable Screening Process

1. Ensure your position description, postings, fliers, and interview questions are culturally competent and free of gendered language, jargon, unexplained abbreviations, and idioms.
2. Create a diverse selection and interview team to provide different perspectives and richer assessments of candidates. If you have a current AmeriCorps member, we encourage you to include them on the hiring team for their replacement!
3. Use a hiring rubric to evaluate applicants in an objective and consistent way (example below).
4. Be transparent about each step of the process with candidates about what they can expect.
5. Offer inclusive video interviews by including video call instructions and best practices in advance of the interview. This guidance can level the playing field if candidates are not used to video calls. Alternatively, consider conducting first-round interviews by phone.
6. Check for personal bias during interviews (see [this article](#) for resources and suggestions).
7. Use a standardized and purposeful set of interview questions for all candidates to ensure consistency and fairness in the evaluation process (examples below).

## Hiring Rubric

Below is a sample hiring rubric you can use to assess candidates. Using a hire rubric reduces the risk of internal bias in assessing candidates. Click [here](#) to download a rubric example in excel format.

Scale: 5=Expectational, 4= Above Average, 3= Average, 2= Below Average, 1=Unsatisfactory

Applicant Name	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Communication/Interpersonal Skills		
Coordination/Experience/Problem Solver		
Training/Teaching/Leadership Experience		
Motivation/Interest/Career Fit		
Racial Justice/ Equity/ Diversity/ Inclusion Experience & Commitment		
Average:		
Notes:		



## Interview Tips

- Create a comfortable, welcoming environment. Introduce yourself and any other panel members and share preferred personal pronouns. Consider asking icebreaker questions to make your candidates more comfortable.
- Whenever possible, send interview questions in advance to candidates, or provide their own copy to look at during the interview.
- Provide a brief overview of your program including program goals and what the day-to-day is like. Give the applicant room to ask questions about it.
- Ask interview questions that focus on capabilities rather than direct experience. For example, ask “How would you *approach* x,” instead of “How you ever done x.”
- If there are specific skills an applicant needs to have (e.g., software or equipment knowledge) make sure to clarify the applicant's experience level with those skills.
- Generally, it is illegal to ask candidates questions associated with the following categories: Race, disabilities, marital status, religion, height and weight, non-professional affiliations, personal life such as spouse, children, or financial situation.

## Example Short Interview Questions

If you have a large pool of qualified candidates, we recommend using a short interview format (15-30 minutes) to reduce the size of your pool for longer interviews. Limit questions to 4-5 total. These examples can be tailored to your specific site and the qualifications you are seeking in candidates.

1. Availability & Eligibility: Are you available to start on (expected start date)? How many hours per week do you anticipate being available? Will you be a student during your service? Class schedule? Have you completed any previous terms of AmeriCorps service? (Review other eligibility requirements.)
2. Communication Skills: We are looking for a candidate who has exceptional communication skills since you'll be (describe position and who they'll be serving). Please describe your skill set in this area and provide examples of when you have shown exceptional interpersonal, team building, written, and verbal communication skills.
3. Coordination Experience: Please describe your coordination experience and skills in organizing and problem-solving complex projects. Which of your attributes do you think would be most beneficial in this role?
4. Training/Teaching/ Leadership Development: A large part of this position is training and teaching (describe). What is your teaching and leadership style? Describe your experience teaching, training, and mentoring others.



5. Motivation/Interest /Maturity/Career Fit/Self-Starter/Professionalism: Why are you interested in this position? Why do you think you are the best candidate?

## Example Long Interview Questions

If your pool of candidates is 3-5 individuals, we suggest you skip the short interview format above and go right to longer interviews (45-60 minutes). Like the short interview questions, please tailor these for your specific site and qualifications you are seeking. Adjust any questions that have already been asked if you did short interviews.

1. Availability & Eligibility: Are you available to start on (expected start date)? How many hours per week do you anticipate being available? Will you be a student during your service? Class schedule? Have you completed any previous terms of AmeriCorps service? (Review other eligibility requirements.)
2. Motivation/Interest /Maturity/Career Fit/Self-Starter/Professionalism: Why are you interested in this position? Why do you think you are the best candidate?
3. Communication Skills: We are looking for a candidate who has exceptional communication skills since you'll be (describe position and who they'll be serving). Please describe your skill set in this area and provide examples of when you have shown exceptional interpersonal, team building, written, and verbal communication skills.
4. Coordination Experience/Organized/Problem Solver: Please describe your coordination experience and skills in organizing and problem-solving complex projects. Which of your attributes do you think would be most beneficial in this role?
5. Training/Teaching/ Leadership Development: A large part of this position is training and teaching (describe). What is your teaching and leadership style? Describe your experience teaching, training, and mentoring others.
6. Racial Justice/Equity/Diversity/Inclusion: One of the goals of our program is to increase educational equity and help students from marginalized backgrounds succeed. Tell us about your experience working in social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work. What are the most important aspects of your experience that you will bring to this service to help us achieve our goals?
7. Community Engagement/Volunteer Experience: Describe any community engagement or volunteer service you've completed. What did you learn from these experiences?



8. Project Work: Describe an example of a project or initiative you led or contributed to that resulted in a positive impact. What was your role? What did you learn?
9. Communication: Describe how you would handle working with someone you struggle to communicate with. Provide an example if you have one. How would you overcome this challenge?
10. Challenges: Tell us about one of the biggest challenges you have ever faced and how you overcame it (please only share what you are comfortable sharing).
11. Fun Question: If you could have any superpower, what would you want and why? -OR- If you could be any animal, what would you want to be and why?
12. Open Ended/Candidate Questions: Is there anything we haven't asked you that we wished we had, or anything else you would like to share? Alternatively, what questions do you have for us?

## Reference Checks

WACC and AmeriCorps require that you  at least two of a candidate's references via phone or email, or (if submitted) review any references that came in with their national application. National applications generally include two written references and their contact information, but not always. It is up to the hiring manager if you want to contact references on a national application for further information.

It is good practice to let the applicant know ahead of time you will be contacting references. Before contacting references, prepare a strong set of open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses. Lastly, respect the confidentiality of the information the reference shares.

### Example Reference Check Questions

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
2. How would you describe the candidate's reliability and dependability? What was it like to work with them?
3. What are the candidate's greatest strengths?
4. What are their primary areas for growth?
5. If you could hire this candidate again, would you? Why or why not?
6. Anything else we should know about the candidate?

## Hooray, I've selected my member(s)! Now what?

Congratulations! Please see the [Enrollment Process Overview](#) document for next steps.