4-H Science in Urban Communities Promising Practices

STAFFING WITH AMERICORPS

Chad Ripberger
County 4-H Agent, CEDH
Rutgers University
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
HOW WE DID IT

- 4-H professionals nominated by SPL and science liaisons
- Each self-identified strengths in content areas
- Provided description, promising practices, and challenges in each of top 5 content areas
- Compiled info for each content area
- Conference calls in each content area
- Writing and review
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<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
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1. PROGRAM DESIGN
2. ENTREPRENEURIAL
3. PARTNER
4. BUILD CAPACITY
5. TELL THEIR STORY
SECTION 1: 4-H SCIENCE CORE PRINCIPLES

• 4-H Science Program Design – 4-H Science Checklist
• Inquiry Based Learning Approaches
• Providing Youth Authentic Opportunities to Practice and Share Science Abilities
• Training Others to Deliver Science Programs
SECTION 2: PARTNERSHIPS

- Afterschool Providers
- Summer Program Providers
- City Government & City Parks and Recreation
- Universities & Campus-Based Scientists
- Science Centers & Museums
- State Level Practices to Advance Urban Programming
SECTION 3: STAFFING, RECOGNITION, MARKETING

- Content Rich Volunteers
- AmeriCorps Members
- Teenagers as Teachers
- Recognizing Youth & Showcasing Efforts
- Marketing & Branding 4-H Science in Urban Communities
Eighteen 4-H Youth Development professionals from across the country contributed to the development of this promising practices guide for 4-H Science in Urban Communities as part of a National 4-H initiative funded by the Noyce Foundation. The guide includes promising practices, case studies, and suggested resources in each of 15 content areas - all with a focus on expanding the quality and quantity of out-of-school science programming.
Staffing with AmeriCorps Members

Introduction

AmeriCorps can be a wonderful resource for staffing 4-H Science programs. Perhaps one of the most important roles AmeriCorps members can play is the generation of volunteers. Most members serve in local, community-based organizations, expanding opportunities to be active in education and building community involvement and support. Other ways members help include increasing and expanding the quality of services and raising awareness of the organization in the community. Organizations that are awarded AmeriCorps grants are responsible for recruiting the AmeriCorps members to serve in their program. AmeriCorps grants initially cover the expenses of operating an AmeriCorps program and do not cover general organizational expenses. Once an in-kind match is achieved.

There are three types of AmeriCorps programs:

1. AmeriCorps NCCC was designed specifically for youth poverty in low-income communities. AmeriCorps NCCC members are focused oncapacity building; they do not engage in direct service projects. AmeriCorps NCCC members work in a variety of roles, including helping to build new homes, renovating schools, and providing educational support. In order to be eligible for an AmeriCorps NCCC grant, an organization must be a non-profit organization.

2. AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National provide funds to state and national organizations and agencies committed to using national service to address critical community needs. AmeriCorps NCCC members are focused on capacity building; they do not engage in direct service projects. In order to be eligible for an AmeriCorps NCCC grant, an organization must be a non-profit organization.

3. AmeriCorps NCCC engages teams of members in service projects in communities across the United States. These projects typically last from six to twelve weeks, and address critical needs related to natural and cultural resources, energy conservation, and urban and rural development. Members may focus on youth, children, and families or urban or rural areas.

The purpose of this chapter is to help youth science program planners understand how to work with AmeriCorps members to develop and sustain 4-H Science programs. Two methods for working with AmeriCorps are discussed here. The first involves working with AmeriCorps program partners, partnering with other organizations that sponsor AmeriCorps members. The second method is to engage in direct service projects. 4-H Science program staff position AmeriCorps as an alternative to paid staff, helping to meet the needs of the program while also meeting the needs of the community. Program management of an AmeriCorps NCCC Program requires careful consideration of the organization's needs. A careful and thoughtful match is necessary.

Promising Practices

The promising practices for staffing with AmeriCorps members are outlined in this section. These practices include:

1. Engaging with the community to develop and sustain a 4-H Science program. This practice involves working with local organizations and agencies to develop a plan for sustaining the program. This plan should include a commitment to providing ongoing support and resources to the program.

2. Creating a strong and supportive environment for members. This practice involves creating a supportive environment for members to feel comfortable and engaged. This includes providing opportunities for members to engage in professional development and networking.

3. Using technology to enhance the program. This practice involves using technology to enhance the program. This includes using social media to communicate with members and to provide resources.

These practices are intended to help organizations effectively use AmeriCorps members to support their 4-H Science programs.
AmeriCorps 101

- Domestic Service Organization
- Environment, Education, Public Safety, and Homeland Security
- Partnerships with Non-profits
- www.americorps.gov
AmeriCorps 101

- AmeriCorps State & National
  - Direct Service (11 month)

- AmeriCorps VISTA
  - Build Capacity on Poverty Issues (12 month)

- AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps
  - Residential for 18-24 yr old (10 month)
AmeriCorps 101

• Benefits
  – Members
    • Education Award - $4,725
    • Possible Living Allowance
  – Organizations
    • Volunteer Recruitment and Management
    • Talent, Skills and Commitment – Full Time
    • Leveraged Fiscal Resource

4-H Science in Urban Communities – Staffing with AmeriCorps
America’s WETLAND Conservation Corps

STAFFING WITH AMERI CORPS CASE STUDY

Ashley Mullens
Extension Associate
Louisiana State University
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
Promising Practices for 4-H Science in Urban Communities 2 of 2
WHAT IS THE AWCC?

• AmeriCorps program designed to promote wetland conservation through volunteer-based restoration projects and outreach education

• AWCC members work to increase public awareness of Louisiana’s wetland loss through education, restoration projects, and community involvement
AWCC Members

• Members located in parishes across the state
  — Work both Full and Part Time

• Supervised by LSU AgCenter 4-H Agents

• Work hand in hand with the YWP by:
  — Writing lessons
  — Recruiting schools
  — Leading/Organizing field trips
  — Guest Speakers
4-H Science in Urban Communities – Staffing with AmeriCorps
Adventure Central

Staffing with AmeriCorps Case Study

Nate Arnett
Extension Educator
The Ohio State University
Dayton, Ohio
ADVANCED CENTRAL

- Education Center
- School-age Youth and Families
- Afterschool and Day Camp
- Partnership - Five Rivers MetroParks and Ohio State University Extension, 4-H
- Nature, Science, Healthy Lifestyles, Life Skills
ADVENTURE CENTRAL

- Our Experience With AmeriCorps
  - Both AmeriCorps and VISTA
- Training and Structure

4-H SCIENCE IN URBAN COMMUNITIES – STAFFING WITH AMERICORPS
• Benefits to Organization
  – Leverage $ & Partner Manages Details
  – Stay Focused
  – Fresh Perspective

• Challenges to Organization
  – Community Over Content
  – Continuity & Relationships
Revisiting, Training, and Supporting

• Search for the right fit.
• Use AmeriCorps as an opportunity to grow your own staff.
• Provide monthly check-ins.
• Set individual program goals for the AmeriCorps members.
Recruiting, Training, and Supporting

- Promote partnerships.
- Capitalize on the newness.
- Terminate the AmeriCorps member if not a good fit for the program.
WORKING WITH AMERICorps
PROGRAM PARTNERS

• Find a compatible partner.
• Develop a relationship with the partner’s AmeriCorps supervisor.
Direct AmeriCorps Program Management

- Allow the program site supervisors to select the AmeriCorps members.
- Host trainings for site supervisors.
- Station AmeriCorps members in various locations for multisite programs.