



## Commission on National and Community Service

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### Memo

**To:** 2017-18 AmeriCorps State Program Directors  
**From:** New York State Commission on National and Community Service  
**Date:** August 9, 2017  
**Subject:** AmeriCorps Teleservice Guidance

Telework has become increasingly popular across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and in the context of AmeriCorps, teleservice has become an emerging issue. To reduce complications related to the issue of teleservice, the New York State Commission on National and Community Service (the Commission) is offering some guidance for programs regarding AmeriCorps members who request to perform their service remotely (teleservice). Members requesting teleservice arrangements under the auspices of reasonable accommodation of a disability are excluded from this policy, as those requests are covered under other laws and policies.

Consistent with the Corporation for National and Community Service's mission, the Commission believes that members should provide services directly to individuals in the communities where they serve. Therefore, teleservice should be rare, if ever, and should involve thorough documentation, justification, supervision, and oversight. The Commission does not have an official teleservice policy, believing that each program must define within its own service context a policy that is workable within the general principles outlined below.

The following guidance is provided for those unique situations in which your program administration determines that teleservice is appropriate or when a small number of a member's service hours can be properly accrued through teleservice. Teleservice may only be considered for service hours when the activity can be meaningfully supervised and the hours verified. If your program determines that AmeriCorps members will be allowed to earn hours via teleservice under special circumstances, the Commission recommends that your program develops a policy that addresses the following:

- Written authorization of teleservice in advance, preferably before a predetermined minimum number of days
- Written expectations of the communication requirements between supervisors and members
- An explicit outline of the consequences of time and attendance abuse
- Appropriate supervision including validation of the activities to be performed
- Demonstrable ability to verify hours claimed

Depending upon the nature of your program's service activities and the teleservice under scrutiny, your organization should review its insurance coverage with your agent or carrier. The Commission also recommends that before you adopt and implement any policy on teleservice, you consult with your agency's attorney to determine if the policy is workable within your overall operations.

If you do not adopt a teleservice policy, you cannot award service hours to any AmeriCorps members for teleservice performed. **You MUST have an adopted policy to do so, and members must be given written notice as to the policy.** Any issues arising regarding implementation of the policy must be handled through your grievance process.

Your program officers will be happy to answer questions, but cannot approve or disapprove your teleservice policy. However, if you choose to adopt a policy, they will review during site visits and other monitoring exercises whether the policy is consistent with the principles outlined above and whether it is being implemented as written. Please contact us at (518) 473-8882.