



CTEP Fact Sheet

The AmeriCorps Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP) is a new, innovative, initiative that will bridge the "digital divide" in Minneapolis and St. Paul urban neighborhoods, targeting the unique technology access and resource access needs of new Immigrants and low-income residents. This project has been approved for funding by the Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps), and is slated to begin programming by Oct.1, 2004.

CTEP represents a unique collaborative of multicultural/community-based, City, and State resources. Each partner offers unique expertise and is committed to a common mission, which promises the potential for tremendous success. Partner organizations are: C-CAN, St. Paul Neighborhood Network, the City of Minneapolis, and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR).

Congress provides funding for the AmeriCorps program through the Corporation for National Service. Federal funding for AmeriCorps projects covers Members living allowances for 12 months, and includes an educational stipend following successful completion of Members' service year. Local project partners provide operating support for the project, and cover 25% of additional member costs (health insurance, FICA, etc.). The CTEP project has also been awarded an additional State of Minnesota AmeriCorps grant to help cover Member support and training costs.

25 new, full-time AmeriCorps Members will be recruited from neighborhood computer labs and non-profit organizations to serve in this program, offering area youth a terrific opportunity to both gain job experience, and save money for college or trade school.

CTEP Program Goals and Activities

The primary goal of this project is to help area CTCs utilize their existing community technology resources to better serve the needs of both youth and adults within their local neighborhoods. A secondary goal is teach CTC staff and visitors how to use media technologies (digital video and web) in order to help new Immigrant and low-income residents connect to existing civic, social service and community resources.

Activities

To help bridge the digital divide in low-income and new Immigrant communities, CTEP will place 25 full-time AmeriCorps Members within community based organizations (CBOs) and CTCs to conduct the following activities:

- Assess their technology capacities and train them on how to best use those capacities;
- Train staff and volunteers on how to use their technology (train the trainer);
- Develop stronger volunteer bases through which they can extend programming and more adequately meet the needs of targeted communities;
- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate informational websites and public service announcements (PSAs) that provide community members with access to critical resources and information.

The success of this project will result in increased technology literacy within low-income and new Immigrant communities throughout the metropolitan areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is the national service program that engages thousands of dedicated Americans in meeting the critical needs of communities in areas of public safety, education, human needs and the environment. An AmeriCorps member serves at an organization to meet those unmet needs without displacing current workers. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members receive a nominal living allowance and education awards to help them finance future education or to pay back student loans.

The AmeriCorps program is designed to be much more than a temporary job for members. Instead, it is an opportunity for members to provide service to their communities, develop skills, including leadership skills, meet and work with AmeriCorps members from all over the country, learn about social issues facing our community, and to experience working as a team to achieve results.

Our program is governed by the Minnesota Commission on National and Community Service (the State Commission as we usually call it). We must abide by the rules and regulations of the State Commission as well as the federal government.

What does the AmeriCorps Program involve?

The AmeriCorps program has four components:

- Getting Things Done Objectives

- Community Strengthening Objectives
- Member Development Objectives
- Statewide AmeriCorps Events

Getting Things Done:

The Getting Things Done objectives consist of the members' daily service at the organization (i.e. helping to start up computer classes, doing a technology assessment for the lab, and conducting workshops.)

Community Strengthening:

Community Strengthening objectives consist of the tasks involved in reaching out to the community. The CTEP members will be required to conduct several community service projects throughout their year of service.

Member Development:

Member Development objectives involve evaluating and improving the members' skills through performance evaluations, conferences, training sessions, etc. The CTEP members are required to attend training sessions to enhance not only their service-readiness skills (computer skills, etc.) but also their personal attributes in the workplace (conflict management, leadership, communication styles, etc.) and their citizenship skills.

Supervisors and members are required to complete Performance Evaluation Forms twice a year and meet with Project Director for conferences. Supervisors should also keep Director informed about concerns that they have with the member's performance at anytime throughout the year.

Statewide AmeriCorps Events:

Members are required to attend certain AmeriCorps statewide events, such as the AmeriCorps Launch in the fall, the Martin Luther King Day celebration, a mid-year training conference and the end-of-year celebration in June. Attendance at these events is necessary for us to maintain our AmeriCorps funding.

We are strongly encouraged to have one member from our corps serve on the statewide InterCorps Council. This involves attending monthly or quarterly meetings and occasional retreats. Members must discuss their interest in the council with their supervisors before they can be chosen to serve on it.

What is the role of AmeriCorps members?

AmeriCorps members have position descriptions that outline their specific duties. They must perform direct service or that outlined in their position description. They cannot displace a current employee or act as a substitute for an employee of partner organizations.

How long will the AmeriCorps members be here?

Members are enrolled into the program for a year, from October through mid-Sept. If their performance is satisfactory, they may come back and do a second term of service. Two years is the maximum length that a person can participate in our program. This is a provision of the federal government.

What are the AmeriCorps members' hours?

Members work a 40-hour week. They spend 28 hours at their host site, 8 hours at a Friday training session, and 4 hours performing special project tasks.

Do AmeriCorps members have other jobs?

Some do. However, their AmeriCorps assignments are their *primary assignments*. Members are required to ensure that the schedules of their other jobs do not conflict with their service schedules.

Host Site Selection Criteria

1. Community partners, "host sites", will be selected by an advisory committee according to the following criteria;
2. Partner organizations should have an operational community technology center (CTC) within one or more of their facilities. CTCs should be free and open to public use for a minimum of 12 hours per week.
3. Partner organizations should be involved in active CTC programming, or show a commitment towards CTC programming.
4. Partner organizations should serve low-income and especially new Immigrant populations (as per the grant language).
5. Partner organizations must provide day-to-day supervision for each AmeriCorps Member, oversee their work plans, and report to Project Director monthly on program progress and challenges. Host site supervisors will also be expected to attend an AmeriCorps orientation, and quarterly meetings/workshops with CTEP staff.
6. Partners must be able to cover part of the CTEP member support costs:(\$2000.00 for organizations with annual budgets under 500K, \$2500.00 for all others.)
7. Partner organizations are encouraged to coordinate with other organizations to apply for AmeriCorps Members. (Example: Public libraries might share two members between 4-5 sites.)
8. Partner organizations will need to become members of CTCNet Minnesota (\$200.00 annual membership).

9. Host sites must provide a defined office space, computer access and telephone service for each AmeriCorps Member on-site.
10. Partner organizations will be expected to actively recruit AmeriCorps Members from their communities.

AMERICORPS Community Technology Empowerment Project

Contact Information

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Web Resources

Community-Computer Access Network (C-CAN): <http://www.c-can.org>

ServeMinnesota: <http://www.serveminnesota.org>

AmeriCorps: <http://www.americorps.gov>