



AMERICA'S  
**SERVICE**  
COMMISSIONS

Next  
**100**



# Service-to-Career Pathways: A Playbook for State Service Commissions to Create Economic Opportunity

OCTOBER 28, 2024 – ROBERT GODFRIED

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To read the full report, visit:

[thenext100.org/service-to-career-pathways-a-playbook-for-state-service-commissions-to-create-economic-opportunity/](https://thenext100.org/service-to-career-pathways-a-playbook-for-state-service-commissions-to-create-economic-opportunity/)

## Acknowledgement:

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## Purpose of This Worksheet

This one-page worksheet is meant to be utilized in tandem with the report: *Service-to-Career Pathways: A Playbook for State Service Commissions to Create Economic Opportunity*. The full report can be found on the [Next100 website](#).

This worksheet is meant to serve as a tool for state service commissions to evaluate their current practices and outline areas for growth. The guidelines below outline how state service commissions can move towards these priorities to increase economic opportunity for members after their term of service.



## I. Economic Opportunity

### Invest in Service-to-Career Pathways and Member Career Development as Part of a Term of Service

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Prioritize grantees that incorporate workforce development training and member career development, including ones that:</b>	
Align service opportunities with community needs and in-demand careers that pay a living wage	
Embed quality workforce development training that aligns with members' service position and requirements to earn industry-relevant certifications and credentials	
Provide quality career development for members, including career exploration, coaching, networking, and goal setting, and job search opportunities	
Offer members onsite supervision through their host sites as they concurrently serve and work towards an industry-relevant certification or credential	
Connect members with mentorships and resources that support members in attaining a high quality, well-paying job after their term of service	

## Develop and Leverage Partnerships with State Agencies and Workforce Development Boards

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Build collaborative relationships with the governor’s office, state-level departments, and regional workforce development board to:</b>	
Understand state workforce, resilience, and infrastructure needs	
Understand issues in the state that have disproportionately impacted underserved communities	
Pinpoint the intersection between high-demand jobs that provide living wages and potential service opportunities	
Understand barriers that underserved communities face to access these jobs	
<b>Utilize these relationships to:</b>	
Attend joint meetings between state agencies to better understand how service can be integrated into state initiatives	
Propose responsive new service programming to meet state and local needs	
Work with state agency partners to brainstorm and propose interagency partnerships to meet shared goals	
Identify workforce development training, resources, or credentials offered by other state agencies or critical partners and make these resources available for service program staff and members	
<b>Identify state and federal funds that can be utilized to provide more robust member benefits and workforce development training including but not limited to:</b>	
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding opportunities	
State workforce dollars	
Federal workforce dollars	
New funding opportunities from the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	

## Develop and Leverage Partnerships with Philanthropy and Industry

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Build relationships with potential philanthropic partners for funding opportunities and leverages these partnerships to:</b>	
Ensure funders are aware of AmeriCorps grants and other national service programs in their state and the value these programs can bring to both communities and the members who serve	
Build an understanding of funder interests and alignment with different service areas	
Connect funders to national service programs working on issues relevant to funder interest	
Build relationships between funders and new service programs in underserved communities	
Identify potential funding opportunities to pilot, scale or sustain program models that aim to increase accessibility of a term of service and/or economic opportunity for members	
<b>Build relationships with regional employers and leverage these partnerships to:</b>	
Gather information on employer needs, in-demand jobs that support an upwardly mobile career path, relevant training, and industry-recognized certifications and credentials for members	
Facilitate job fairs, networking sessions, and informational interviews for corps members	
Co-create workforce development trainings that incorporate the member service experience	
Offer opportunities for industry-specific professionals to mentor and provide guidance and support to members	



## II. Accessibility

### Create Accessibility Standards and Encourage Grantees to Recruit Members Representative of The Communities They Serve

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Communicate to grantees in the AmeriCorps State Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to prioritize programs that:</b>	
Provide a living allowance consistent with the living wage in the county of service	
Offer wraparound services, such as childcare, housing and transportation subsidies, to make service financially accessible to more individuals	
Embed quality workforce training or an industry-relevant credential and career development support to align a term of service with post-service career outcomes	
Collect data on post-service member employment or education outcomes	
<b>Connect members with mentorships and resources that support members in attaining a high quality, well-paying job after their term of service</b>	
Request a higher cost per MSY to provide increased living allowance and benefits for members from or working in low-income communities	
Offer a runway to slowly work up to member recruitment goals	
Offer a member assistance funds for emergencies or other expenses that may prohibit members from serving	
Provide mental health supports for members (including from ASC's MAP Initiative)	
Create racial, and ethnic, and other affinity groups for historically marginalized identities	
<b>Communicate to grantees that they should assist eligible AmeriCorps members who need additional financial assistance to apply for:</b>	
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding	
State specific financial assistance funds	

## Recruit, Support, and Retain Community Organizations (Especially Those Led by People of Color and in Rural Areas)

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Build awareness of AmeriCorps grants and programming in underserved communities by taking steps to:</b>	
Develop an outreach and marketing plan aimed at reaching nonprofits in underserved communities that are led by people of color (POC), located in rural communities, and/or are new to AmeriCorps and that may have capacity issues to develop service programs	
Create a pipeline for POC-led, rural-based, and/or new-to-AmeriCorps nonprofits to participate in AmeriCorps, first as a host site, then a planning grantee, and finally an AmeriCorps grantee	
Prioritize AmeriCorps grantee organizations that recruit members who are representative of the communities being served	
<b>Provide guidance and logistical support to community-based organizations new to the AmeriCorps application process taking steps to:</b>	
Provide training on how and when to apply for an AmeriCorps grant	
Offer training and support for organizational staff on best practices for identifying and working with philanthropic partners	
Provide technical assistance and guidance throughout the application process	
Offer logistical support to smaller nonprofits in the application process	
Provide meaningful, detailed feedback to nonprofits that fail to qualify on what they need to improve to qualify for future funding cycles	
Assist a nonprofit to apply for match relief if necessary	



### III. Commission Capacity

#### Prioritize Accessibility and Economic Opportunity in the State Service Commission State Service Plan

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Integrate accessibility and economic opportunity into the state service plan by taking steps to:</b>	
Solicit feedback from partner agencies, grantees, members, and other relevant parties on the new state service plan and has incorporated this feedback into the document	
Indicate to commissioners, staff, grantees, host sites, and potential partners that these goals are a priority for the commission	
Share the final service plan in detail with grantees, state agencies, and the Governor's office to ensure alignment on key goals	
Set up follow-up meetings with these offices to discuss potential partnerships based on alignment of shared goals	

#### Utilize Outside Resources to Provide Additional Training for Commission Staff and Supplemental Member Benefits

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Take advantage of America's Service Commissions' and the AmeriCorps agency's trainings and resources to expand commission staff capacity by utilizing:</b>	
AmeriCorps grant administration and management trainings	
Commission staff trainings	
Commission staff working groups	
Provide training on how and when to apply for an AmeriCorps grant	
Workforce development trainings and resources	
Service area specific working groups	

National Service Trainings	
Technical assistance visits	
<b>The state service commission has partnered with outside national service focused organizations to offer additional benefits to AmeriCorps members:</b>	
America's Service Commission Member Resources: Mental health coverage (AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program), Member emergency fund (The Schultz Family Foundation Emergency Fund)	
The Corps Network Member Resources: Healthcare coverage (The Corps Network Health Plan), Member emergency fund (Patricia Sagawa Corpsmember Relief Fund)	

### **Prioritize the Recruitment of State Service Commission Staff and Commissioners that are Representative of State Demographics**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Score 1-5</b>
<b>ncourage representative staff recruitment by taking steps to:</b>	
Build a pipeline of new staff that is racially and economically representative of the demographics of its state and is creating a workplace environment that is inclusive and welcoming for all staff	
Hire a staff member that is dedicated to designing and ensuring that members, grantees, service programs, and partners are representative of state demographics or make this a central part of a current staff members responsibilities	
Create a racially and economically representative youth advisory board or member council composed of current service members and recent service alums	
Collect and report out on the demographic data of state service commission members and staff	



## Collect and Analyze Data

Category	Score 1-5
<b>Collect data on grantees and service members in their state by taking steps to:</b>	
Develop a plan in partnership with grantees and relevant state agencies to collect member demographic data, service type and program, and qualitative member feedback	
Provide technical capacity and assistance to grantees to support data collection and ensure consistency across different programs	
Request quantitative data collection from programs in their state that receive AmeriCorps funding, including:	
Member demographic data (race and ethnicity, family socioeconomic data, and educational attainment of corps members—by state and county, as well as issue area and placement type)	
The percentage of corps members serving in the communities where they live	
AmeriCorps program, program type, placement, and issue area	
Member feedback and contact information at the end of their service	
<b>Collect post-service data on members at the end of their service as well as six months and one-year after their service completion to learn and share including:</b>	
Whether corps members complete their service and, upon completion, if members find a job or educational opportunity	
Which industry members work in post-service and disaggregation of those data by sector, under, at the minimum, these specific criteria: The private sector, public sector, the nonprofit sector, or an additional service year	
Members' wages in their post-service positions	
Annual qualitative data from members through a survey to assess cross-member experience across the state	
Disaggregated data that is publicly and easily accessible on an annual basis	

For Additional Reading Checkout the related [National Governors Association publication, Service as a Pathway to Economic Opportunity: A Roadmap for Governors](#)