

Things to Look for in an Applicant

Once you've determined that an applicant meets the minimum requirements for service (age, citizenship status, and education), what should you look for?

Experience has shown that the most successful members have a commitment to service, enthusiasm for making a difference, flexibility, and an ability to respond well to challenges. The following will help you determine whether your applicant has what it takes:

- Previous skills and experience are not necessarily the strongest indicators of a successful AmeriCorps member. Identify which skills/abilities the applicant already needs to have for the position and which can be easily learned by a willing and able applicant.
- Consider motivation: Is the candidate a self-starter?
- Look at the applicants' previous commitments to determine if they can complete a full service year.
- How much and what type of volunteer work has the applicant done?
- Ask about a difficult and challenging commitment the candidate made and met.
- Ask for examples of when the candidate had to be flexible and adaptable.
- Look for enthusiasm, readiness for challenge, and ability to deal with adversity.
- Determine whether the applicant has fully thought out reasons for applying to become an AmeriCorps member.
- Is the applicant looking for a job or for a service opportunity?
- Have the candidate consider whether he or she can live on the program stipend.
- Has she/he given evidence of tolerance and the ability to work with a wide variety of people?
- Consider the types of questions the candidate asks during the interview. (For example, do the questions focus on the project or primarily on AmeriCorps benefits?)

If you conducted a phone interview, was the applicant attentive or dist