AmeriCorps Alums:

FAQs on Creating and Holding Events for Alums' AmeriCorps Graduation Campaign

This guide outlines a few easy ways to celebrate AmeriCorps members and elevate any graduation activities you might already have planned! The 20th anniversary of AmeriCorps in September 2014 generated incredible energy in the national service field, bringing together Corps members, programs, funders, government officials, alumni and others around a common cause. As a continuation of our celebration of service, AmeriCorps Alums is calling on all partners to celebrate the graduation of AmeriCorps members and their transition to alums each year! **Also visit www.americorpsalums.org/?Graduation for additional campaign elements and resources.**

1. **Why should we get involved with this initiative?**

   This is a great opportunity to:

   - o **Connect AmeriCorps members to "life after AmeriCorps" resources.** Only a third of alums strongly agree they were well supported to launch "life after AmeriCorps." This campaign is an opportunity to share professional and educational resources with members near you (check out our Membership Guide and website for more information on FREE resources from AmeriCorps Alums).
   - o **Promote your program/chapter/employer across AmeriCorps Alums channels and elevate the good work you're already doing to new networks.** We'll be highlighting registered events across our social media channels, including on our website, blog, Twitter, and Facebook pages reaching over 150,000 alumni across the country. This is a great way to promote your organization including to alums who may no longer be connected to AmeriCorps or to the Corps members serving near them.

2. **What kinds of events can I host as part of the AmeriCorps Alums Graduation Campaign?**

   The goal of the AmeriCorps Alums Graduation Campaign is to celebrate Corps members' graduation and welcome them to the alumni network. Events can be small or large – do what works best for you and your community! We encourage AmeriCorps programs, AmeriCorps Alums chapters, and AmeriCorps state commissions to host either a social, a professional development/networking event, or a service project. Here are a few examples of events you can do in each of these categories.

Socials: Host an AmeriCorps graduation ceremony and reception, dance at an Ameri-Prom, gather at a picnic/potluck table, offer toasts at a happy hour, compete at a field day contest, showcase hidden talents in a talent show, or get together for a game night.

Professional Development/Networking: Connect with alumni from your state or AmeriCorps program to speak with graduating AmeriCorps members about their life after AmeriCorps, do a resume review, or be part of a career fair. If you're looking for alums to speak at events, we encourage you to connect with a local chapter or post to our social media pages. You could also organize a speed networking event with local alums and employers from your area (check out the Employers of National Service site for a list of organizations already invested in national service alumni), which is a great way to grow support of your program. Consider talking to development/fundraising staff in your office about collaborating on this as an opportunity to engage new and existing partners in the power of your program.

Service Project: Connect with an AmeriCorps Alums chapter or alumni from your program and help Corps members connect to alumni through service. Alternatively, work with alumni from your program to do a service project (like graduation gift bags, a Life-After-AmeriCorps Survival Kit, etc.) for Corps members.

3. **How can I share my event with AmeriCorps Alums in order to promote my event?**

   Sharing your event with us is a great way to promote it and connect with alums near you. If you are not a chapter, please click here to submit your event. Once you submit your event, we will promote it by adding it to our community calendar and social media communications. If you are an AmeriCorps Alums chapter, have your chapter leader post the event on your chapter calendar page on www.AmeriCorpsAlums.org and Alums' staff will add it to the main calendar.

4. **Who can I partner with to help host an event?**

   The best partners for the AmeriCorps Alums Graduation Campaign could include AmeriCorps state commissions, AmeriCorps Alums chapters, AmeriCorps program alumni associations, nearby AmeriCorps host site employers, agencies, or nonprofits. Click here for a list of our 20th anniversary partners.

5. **What tips and resources does AmeriCorps Alums have to create a successful event?**

   For a great event, plan early, find partners, and take advantage of resources from AmeriCorps Alums. Unfortunately, there are no grants available from AmeriCorps Alums at this time – but we're AmeriCorps alums—we know we can do a lot on a little! Any event – small or large – can help Corps members better prepare to launch "life after AmeriCorps" and help elevate the brand of your organization.

   In addition to Alums gear, which is available at our online store, AmeriCorps Alums will provide the following free resources available at http://www.americorpsalums.org/?Graduation.

- Customizable AmeriCorps graduation certificate to congratulate Corps members
- Social media templates for marketing events that include an AmeriCorps Alums June graduation image
- A YouTube graduation video featuring a slide-show of images of graduating Corps members
- A flyer on the benefits of being an AmeriCorps alum
- An event checklist of what to do before, during, and after the event (see last page of this guide)
- An updated Membership Guide to help Corps members sign up with alums.

6. **How can I follow up with AmeriCorps Alums after my event to share stories and pictures?**

Gain a national spotlight for your great local events! We'll be showcasing a round-up of the best events, stories, and pictures that we receive on our blog and hope to include your celebration. We're so thankful you're partnering with us to have an event and can't wait to hear how it goes. On the day of the event, we encourage you to post to social media and tag us on our Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook pages/accounts. Send stories and your 3-5 best high-resolution pictures from your event to Events@AmeriCorpsAlums.org.

Event Checklist

Before the Event

- [ ] Create an event planning team and decide on the type and name of the event.
- [ ] Assign roles and responsibilities to your planning team and move on to event logistics.
- [ ] Pick a day, time, and place for your event.
- [ ] Register your event with AmeriCorps Alums (click here)
- [ ] Create an event agenda or run-of-show.
- [ ] Create an event registration page or other system for tracking RSVPs.
- [ ] Send out event invitations (4-6 weeks before your event).
- [ ] Start promoting the event (4-6 weeks prior) on social media using #AmeriGrad and tag the AmeriCorps Alums pages/accounts on Facebook and Twitter (we are glad to cross-promote events).
- [ ] One week before event:
    - [ ] Confirm event logistics with event venue.
    - [ ] Send reminder to event attendees with directions to event venue and info on parking and other logistics if needed.
    - [ ] Gather supplies for event (event sign and event registration table, nametags, pens/markers, Alums gear etc.).

The Day of the Event

- [ ] Arrive at least 1 hour before the event to set up registration table and event signs.
- [ ] Register and welcome all attendees as they arrive (sample registration sign-in form available here).
- [ ] Follow event agenda/run-of-show.
- [ ] Take pictures and video and post to social media using #AmeriGrad and tagging AmeriCorps Alums social media accounts/pages.
- [ ] Thank everyone for attending.

After the Event

- [ ] Within 24-48 hours, send a thank you email to guests (click here for a sample thank you email).
- [ ] Post photos and video from the event using #AmeriGrad and tagging AmeriCorps Alums social media accounts/pages.
- [ ] Email Events@americorpsalums.org and please send: the registration information for event guests that requested to be added to AmeriCorps Alums national network and your 3-5 best high-resolution pictures from the event with captions.