

Program Civil Rights and Non-Harassment Policy

Advancing civil rights and equal opportunity is the responsibility of the whole of government, and AmeriCorps is committed to these principles, including treating all persons who participate in our programs with dignity and respect. The service environments demand that AmeriCorps maintains a zero tolerance for unlawful harassment or discrimination against any individual or groups engaged in national service.

AmeriCorps expects the same commitment from all recipients (Recipients) of services, programs, and benefits; including service members, volunteers, associated individuals, organizations, programs, and projects. This policy is incorporated by reference into the terms and conditions for AmeriCorps Recipients, inclusive of sub-grantees. Recipients are expected to notify service members and volunteers of their rights under this policy.

In accordance with applicable laws and regulations, AmeriCorps prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment based on the protected categories of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability (mental or physical), political affiliation, marital or parental status, pregnancy, reprisal, genetic information (including family medical history), or military service. All entities receiving federal financial assistance from AmeriCorps; and all programs, services, and benefits administered by such entities; must be free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. Harassment is any unwelcome conduct or conduct done in reprisal for opposing discrimination or participating in the discrimination complaint process, when such behavior has the purpose or effect of interfering with service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive service environment.

Harassment may include slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected category. Examples of harassing conduct include, but are not limited to: explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors; pressure to engage in a romantic relationship or for dates; deliberate touching of another person without consent; leaning over or cornering a person; repeated offensive teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions; unwanted letters, text messages, emails, or phone calls; distribution or display of offensive materials, including on social media; offensive looks or gestures; and/or sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious baiting. Harassment can also include physical assault or other threatening behavior, as well as other demeaning, debasing, or abusive comments or actions that intimidate.

AmeriCorps does not tolerate discrimination and harassment from anyone, including Recipients; AmeriCorps employees and supervisors; project or site employees and supervisors; project or site non-employees (e.g., contractors or clients of a project or site); or national service participants. Harassment is unacceptable in AmeriCorps offices or campuses and in other service-related settings such as convenings, training sessions, service sites, and at service-related social events, whether in-person or online.



Any discrimination or harassment, when substantiated, will result in corrective action, up to and including removal or termination of any individual engaging in such misconduct.

AmeriCorps Recipients permitting discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to a finding of non-compliance, which may result in termination of federal financial assistance.

Recipients are expected to take prompt action to effectively address service member and volunteer complaints. Recipients must immediately investigate complaints of discrimination or harassment and take appropriate measures to remedy the situation. Supervisors and managers of AmeriCorps programs and projects; when made aware of alleged discrimination or harassment by employees, service members and volunteers, or any other associated individuals; must report the matter to the personnel in the Recipient's organization who are responsible for investigating such claims or AmeriCorps' Office of Civil Rights (OCR). OCR conducts service member and volunteer discrimination and harassment inquiries.

AmeriCorps prohibits any retaliatory action against a person who raises discrimination or harassment concerns.

Service members and volunteers who believe they have been subjected to treatment in violation of any civil rights laws, regulations, or this policy, or have been subject to retaliation for opposing discrimination or participating in discrimination complaint proceedings (e.g., filing a complaint or acting as a witness) in any AmeriCorps program or project, may contact the OCR at (202) 606-7503 or eo@americorps.gov. Recipients must contact OCR within 30 calendar days of an occurrence of discrimination or harassing conduct to initiate an inquiry in the civil rights complaint process.

Service members and volunteers are not required to use a program, project, or sponsor dispute resolution process before contacting OCR. While Recipients are expected to take prompt action to effectively address service member and volunteer complaints, Recipients cannot institute policies requiring any such matters be handled "in house." If a service member or volunteer chooses to pursue another dispute resolution or complaint procedure, it does not suspend the 30 calendar-day time limit for contacting OCR. Discrimination and harassment claims that are not brought to the attention of OCR within 30 calendar days of the occurrence may not be accepted for investigation if a formal complaint of discrimination is filed.

Service members, volunteers, grantees, sub-grantees, and Recipients may contact OCR at eo@americorps.gov for information or assistance. Further details on AmeriCorps' civil rights complaint process can be found at 45 C.F.R. Part 1225.

February 21, 2025

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi'.

Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi
Interim Agency Head
AmeriCorps