The Washington Service Corps (WSC) hosts one training (SERVES) institute in the Fall during the program year. This three-day event provides an excellent vehicle for members to receive valuable training and network with other members from across the state. The training helps them be more effective in their service assignment.

Attendance and participation at SERVES is mandatory for individually-placed AmeriCorps*State members, including Washington Reading Corps members. SERVES requires overnight stay, except for those considered local. Members are required to attend all scheduled SERVES events with the exception of evening recreational activities. Exceptions for non-attendance will be limited to compelling reasons, and as approved by WSC staff.

The WSC is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive environment for its members. This policy addresses member and staff behavior expectations while attending the SERVES Institute as it may affect member safety, service, performance, and attendance.

I. EXPECTATIONS

A. Each project supervisor will ensure that their members are registered to attend by completing the SERVES registration form sent to them approximately one month before the scheduled Institute. The registration must be completed by the due date indicated on the form. Project sites may be liable for paying the costs for last minute cancellations and/or no shows.

B. Commuting to the SERVES Institute daily is only allowed for members residing within the city of SERVES venue site.

C. WSC assigns lodging by same gender. WSC may assign married couples to the same room if they provide documentation of marriage.

D. The member must pay the hotel for any damage to hotel property incurred by the member’s actions or negligence, and all incidental expenses incurred (such as telephone charges, special movie requests, etc.). Payment will follow contractual agreement established between the hotel and WSC.

E. Special needs and accommodations must be disclosed by the due date indicated on the registration packet and may require medical documentation to justify.

F. To be excused from attending, the member must submit to their Project Supervisor a written request for exception, including the reasons. Upon support of the member’s request, the Project Supervisor then forwards the request to their Program Coordinator with their recommendation to approve the member’s request. Note: the Project Supervisor is expected to encourage full attendance at the SERVES Institute and only forward exception requests for compelling reasons (such as serious illness of member or family member).
G. The WSC will send a confirmation email, listing lodging arrangements and the link to conference materials, to members approximately two weeks prior to SERVES. Conference materials will include directions, agendas, and workshop listings.

I. Members must be aware of the rules and regulations enforced by the facility hosting the event.

J. Vegetarian and Vegan meal options will be available at SERVES but any further dietary restrictions will be the responsibility of the individual.

II. CHILD CARE:

WSC SERVES Institutes are designed to provide AmeriCorps members with as much valuable information and skill development as possible from the start of the events to the close of the events. We seek to minimize distractions and disturbances in order that all in attendance may receive the maximum benefit from the offerings. To that end:

A. Children and other family members of AmeriCorps members are not allowed at SERVES Institute activities. Specific exceptions may be made if an AmeriCorps member is nursing an infant. Such exceptions must be approved by the WSC in advance.

B. A member who is nursing and brings an infant must also bring or arrange for a caretaker for the infant. AmeriCorps and the WSC assume no liability for the caretaker or the child.

C. The member is responsible for any expenses associated with the caretaker and the child. The WSC does not cover any additional expenses for the family member(s) or caregiver. Coordination with the WSC staff may allow for reservations at the hotel where the member’s teammates are lodged. The member will make any such requests on the registration form, distributed in advance by WSC.

D. Training events (including transportation to and from or lodging for such events), training-related functions and meals are for the AmeriCorps members only.

E. WSC AmeriCorps will only cover the costs for single rooms at trainings to accommodate disabilities, if necessary. Having a child is not considered a disability.

III. PET POLICY

No pets are allowed at the SERVES Institute. Guide dogs and service animals (animals trained for the purpose of assisting or accommodating an individual with a disability) are allowed. Member must disclose on the registration form whether he/she is an individual with a disability who wishes to bring a service animal. WSC may contact members to provide further information. WSC will notify the member’s hotel to accommodate a service animal in the hotel room.

IV. DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE

All WSC-sponsored events are drug and alcohol free as stated in the WSC Member Service Agreement. All members must comply with this policy, and if found in violation will be subject to formal disciplinary action up to and including termination of service.

For questions regarding this policy, project sites/sponsor agencies should contact their WSC Program Coordinator.