



## FAQ about the Ohio History Services Corps, an AmeriCorps Program

### *What exactly is AmeriCorps?*

- **AmeriCorps is best described as the “Domestic Peace Corps.”** AmeriCorps is service where a member’s time with AmeriCorps is a contracted term of volunteer national service. Members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for organizations they service. AmeriCorps members also gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and their experience has a lasting impact on the members and the communities they serve.
- There are different types of AmeriCorps programs:
  - **AmeriCorps State & National** → the broadest of the programs. In Ohio, the state AmeriCorps programs are administered by **ServeOhio**, Ohio’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism. Ohio’s service priorities are education, health, the environment, veterans, and economic opportunity. The Ohio History Services Corps is a state and national program.
  - **AmeriCorps VISTA** → Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) provides full-time members to non-profit, faith-based and other community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty.
  - **AmeriCorps NCCC** → AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC) is a full-time, team-based, residential program for men and women ages 18-24. Its mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

### *What is the Ohio History Services Corps?*

- Since October 2010, the **Ohio History Services Corps (OHSC)** has been supporting community and local history all over Ohio. AmeriCorps members provide service to Ohioans in the categories of historic site survey, collections digitization, and capacity building for local historical organizations. The OHSC works to increase community support for history organizations, to connect organizations to each other and to resources, to provide tools to build capacity and sustainability, and to develop history leaders (the OHSC Members).
  - There are two different types of OHSC Members: **Local History Members** and **Community Surveyor Members.**
- **Local History Members** work with local history organizations in their host site’s region to increase those organizations’ capacity and sustainability. These members will increase local history organizations’ capacity by providing coaching, training, and assistance to their staff and volunteers using the framework of the American Association for State and Local History’s (AASLH) Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations.
- Each of the OHSC/AmeriCorps volunteer groups help local organizations put history to work in their communities.

### *If I want to use the assistance offered by the Ohio History Services Corps/ AmeriCorps member, is there a cost to me?*

- There is no cost to the local organizations who wish to receive the assistance of the Local History Member and/or the Community Surveyor Member.



*What are some projects that OHSC Members can assist with?*

- **Ohio History Services Corps Members** can assist with: developing policies and procedures, assisting with collections management, developing interpretive programming, helping with data collections and evaluation, and engaging volunteers. Additionally, OHSC Members are service-oriented volunteers, supporters and facilitators of local organizations' projects, a clearinghouse of information, ideas, and models, and capacity builders. Each member brings a unique background and experience that makes them a great resource for the organizations' needs.

*What is the **American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH) Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations?***

- "Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs) is AASLH's self-study standards program designed specifically for small to mid-sized history organizations, including volunteer run institutions. Using a workbook an online community, and a three-tiered achievement system with certificates, StEPs enables even the smallest organizations to assess policies and practices, manage daily operations, and plan for the future—all at your own pace!" (<http://tools.aaslh.org/what-is-steps/>)
  - **Certificates of Achievement**-Each time an organization meets the performance indicators (Basic, Good, Better/Bronze, Silver, Gold), it sends in the certificate application and AASLH will send them a certificate. The organization is then recognized at the annual AASLH meeting and their achievement is published/recognized nationally for its hardwork!
  - **Resources**- AASLH provides resources of sample documents, checklists, articles, blogs, webinars, labs, technical leaflets, etc. on many topics that will help the organization plan for the future. All of these are available by going to (<http://tools.aaslh.org/steps/>)
- StEPs covers six sections: Mission, Vision & Governance, Audience, Interpretation, Stewardship of Collections, Stewardship Historic Structures and Landscapes, and Management.
- The OHSC Local History Member provides guidance and assistance in meeting the indicators within each StEPs section and the Ohio History Services Corps allows organizations to 'test drive' the program at no cost to them.

**For any further questions about the Ohio History Services Corps, AmeriCorps, and the services the member provide, please contact your local OHSC Member. (To identify the nearest OHSC member, go to [www.ohiohistory.org/amicorps](http://www.ohiohistory.org/amicorps))**