



Summer Corps: Creating Your Work Plan

Step 1: Establishing Goals

As a Summer Corps member, goal-setting is an important skill to develop. To improve how you set and achieve your goals for your project, we recommend you use the SMART method. SMART goals keep you focused on achieving the ultimate outcome and successfully completing your summer of service. Set high expectations for your summer of service, state clear outcomes, think about how you will measure and track progress toward those outcomes, and change your activities to meet your goals.

Your work plan must align with the project description and outcomes you submitted in your Summer Corps application. We recommend that you review your application as a good starting point before outlining your goals for the summer. You can look at your application by logging in to the [Summer Corps Application Manager \(SAM\)](#). If your project description and/or outcomes have changed substantially since you submitted your application, contact us immediately at summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

You will be required to complete and submit your work plan in [SAM](#) no later than **10 calendar days from your service start date**. Please make sure your supervisor reviews and approves your summer work plan before submission. Given the tight time frame, you'll want to start on this right away.

SMART Goals/Objectives/Activities are:

- **Specific:** What will you accomplish? The goals should have a clear end product. State exactly what you want to accomplish.
- **Measurable:** How will you know when the goals have been accomplished? If possible, define your goals and activities in terms of quantity, cost, or quality. For goals to be measurable there should be some way of actually testing whether the stated targets have been met.
- **Attainable:** Are these goals possible? Do you have control over the outcomes? The goals should have outcomes that are realistic given your current situation, time, and resources. They should require you to stretch a little, without being too extreme. Goals that are either too easy or too hard become meaningless and can easily be ignored.
- **Relevant:** Do these goals further the larger objectives or mission of your organization? Does it further your goals as a member of the legal profession? The goals should be important in the scheme of your organization's larger mission or project. They should fit in well with your project descriptions.
- **Time-Bound:** When do these projects need to be accomplished? The goals should have a deadline to create urgency to take action now. The time frame could be either a specific date or a relative length of time (e.g. "30 days after project launch").

Step 2: Creating a goals chart:

It may be useful to create a goals chart. Your goals chart should begin with the **goal(s)**. A goal is a general, "big picture" statement of outcomes a program intends to accomplish to fulfill its mission.

Next, your goals chart should list the **activities/deliverables** that must be completed to achieve the goals. These objectives should be the “big steps” you plan to complete in order to reach the goals. The objectives, like the goals, should be SMART.

Finally, you will want to note **how to measure progress** toward each goal/objective. Measures of progress should be significant and truly gauge success toward achieving each goal. If possible, they should contain a quantitative value or observable behavior.

See Summer Corps Sample Work Plan.

Step 3: Measurable Outcomes

As AmeriCorps members, we want to know that what you are doing is truly making a difference in your community and in your clients’ lives. To that end, each Summer Corps member, especially those serving in Priority Areas, must incorporate *relevant* performance measures listed in the Summer Corps Member Manual (pages 6-7) in their work plans and indicate how your activities will meet these measures. For example, those Summer Corps members serving veterans will be required to report on the number of veterans served and the number of veterans who had a positive outcome, such as a favorable disability benefits decision or successfully delaying an eviction by two weeks. You will not be expected to track any measures that do not pertain to your project. However, if you achieve outcomes that are not listed as a performance measure, please let us know about these outcomes in the narrative sections. We recommend that you carefully review the reporting requirements in your Member Manual before your service start date.

Training should be included in your work plan. Each member must log some training hours. We recommend that you have at least four hours of training, but no more than 60, during your summer of service. The Equal Justice Works "Welcome to Summer Corps" webinar and any time spent toward host site orientation should be counted as training hours.

Step 4: Timeframe

The final step in creating your work plan is to lay out a timeframe for the summer so you can keep track of your progress. The level of detail in this time table is up to you; the more detailed it is, the more guidance you will have throughout the summer. It will help you to align your calendar with your “Activities” on your goals chart.

Step 5: Successes/Challenges

Throughout your Summer Corps experience and at the end of the summer, reflect on your progress toward reaching your intended goals and the challenges you encountered along the way.

On your last date of service, you will use your work plan to fill out and submit your Final Report in SAM. It is important to carefully track your progress toward set goals throughout the summer, making it easier to submit your Final Report at the end of the summer.

Sample Work Plan

***This is an abbreviated example of how you might structure your Summer Corps work plan. ***

The HIVE Project: Housing and Income for Veterans (and Employment)

June - August 2013

Name:

Host Organization:

Issue Area:

Overall Goal: The overall goal of the HIVE project is to increase income and remove barriers to housing and employment for veterans in Dodge City and the surrounding areas through high quality legal services. The project will conduct legal intake, evaluate cases, provide brief services and assist the host organization's attorneys with direct representation to veterans in need.

Goals/Outcomes: At the end of my summer of service, the project will have the following outcomes:

- Serve at least 30 veterans with obtaining/retaining housing and/or increasing their monthly income.
- Serve at least three veterans with accessing disability or VA benefits.
- Place five veterans in more stable housing as a result of removing legal barriers to housing.
- Increase the income of five veterans by at least \$10,000 as a result of removing legal barriers to employment or reducing/dismissing fines or debts.
- Develop new relationships with four organizations that serve veterans for client referrals (defined by a mutual agreement). This will involve training members of partner organizations to identify and spot legal issues to ultimately receive at least one or more referrals following contact.

See **Sample Work Plan Chart** on next page.

Sample Work Plan Chart

Goals/ Outcomes	Intermediate Outcome	How Goal Will Be Measured	Activities/Deliverables	Successes/Challenges
Increase income for 8 veteran clients by \$10,000	Assist 3 veterans with accessing disability or VA benefits.	# of veterans who receive access to disability benefits # of veterans who receive access to VA benefits	Conduct 20 thorough case evaluations (4 a week in the first 5 weeks). Gather medical records, conduct legal research and write brief. Help file 3 benefits petitions/ appeals cases (VA, SSI/ SSDI) (weeks 6 and 7).	<i>**This section should be filled out at the end of your service term as an opportunity to reflect on some of your successes to reaching this end goal and the challenges you encountered along the way and the actions you took to overcome the challenges.**</i> Example: "I evaluated 20 cases thoroughly and there was only one meritorious criminal expungement case, but four child support cases."
	Assist 5 veterans with increasing monthly income as a result of removing legal barriers to employment or reducing/dismissing fines or debts.	# veterans who have legal barrier to employment removed # veterans who access benefits # veterans who have a fine reduced/dismitted # veterans who have a debt reduced/dismitted	Help expunge 2 client criminal records (weeks 4 and 5). Help reduce child support arrearages for 3 veterans of \$3,500 each by preparing and filing modification orders (ongoing all summer).	
Secure/ retain housing for 5 veteran clients	Assist veterans with access to more stable housing as a result of removing legal barriers to housing.	# veterans who had a barrier to housing removed # veterans who become housed, at least in part, because of service (e.g., removing barrier to housing) # veterans served who remained in housing because of service	Conduct intake on housing matters for 30 veterans. Review claims with supervisor (at least 1 per week, but 2 per week in first 5 weeks of service). Take on 7 claims, with assistance of supervisor. Write letters, negotiate with landlords, conduct legal research. 5 will be successful, defined as eviction delayed or stopped, housing conditions improved.	Example: "During the summer, I was able to serve more veterans on housing issues than anticipated. I spoke to a group of 50 veterans at the Soldier's Home on Main Street, and 25 of them had a similar issue with one landlord. Through letters and negotiations with the landlord, I was able to resolve the issue for 20 of the veterans."

Sample Training Chart

Training	Location	Date	Hours
Equal Justice Works "Welcome to Summer Corps" Webinar	Internet	5/22/13	2 hours
Host Site Orientation	Onsite	5/27/13	8 hours
Local Training on VA benefits	Los Angeles	6/13/13	2 hours
Total Training:			12 hours