

Accessing AmeriCorps Members to Implement Community-Wide Drop-out Prevention Strategies

The mission of the Alliance is to ignite the spark in all young people in Minnesota to become actively engaged, develop strong voices, and acquire the skills needed for success in school, work, and life. In order to ensure all youth achieve success in school, work, and life, we focus on four strategies: 1) strengthening youth success in school and learning, 2) increasing youth contribution through service & leadership opportunities, 3) developing and magnifying youth voice, and 4) promoting collaboration and innovation. Each year over 10,000 youth in Minnesota drop out of school. Minnesota’s academic achievement gap has grown to be the largest in the nation. While Minnesota historically has had higher than average rates of high school graduation, certain sub-groups of youth are dropping out at alarming levels and disengaging from communities. To face this challenge, the Alliance works to support and invest in schools and communities looking to tackle this issue. In particular, the Alliance places AmeriCorps members to serve youth in grades 6 - 10 within communities that have the highest annual high school dropout rates and at the middle schools that feed into those high schools.

Using a Response To Intervention (RTI) approach, each AmeriCorps member, called Promise Fellows, works with at least 30 youth to provide integrated youth support interventions. Based on data from schools, AmeriCorps Promise Fellows work with a site coordinator and a school/community team comprised of supervisors, school social workers, and other school personnel to analyze data, make referrals, identifying youth who need support using early warning indicators, known as the ABC’s, (less than 80% Attendance, Behavior referrals, or poor Course performance). AmeriCorps Promise Fellows ensure youth receive a variety of interventions utilizing caring adults, academic support, and service-learning to deliver them in both in school and out of school settings. Interventions focus on creating supports to help youth improve attendance, behavior, and core academic skills. The Alliance supports deep and sustainable local partnerships that increase the number of people, organizations, and resources dedicated to ensuring graduation success for all youth.

Our goal is to provide the right support to the right youth at the right time

RTI Approach: Early Warning Indicators (ABC’s)	Examples of Interventions for Targeted Youth (Focus List)	<i>To deliver these interventions, AmeriCorps members in school & community based settings:</i>
<i>Attendance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide attendance coaching and monitor with phone calls home if youth miss class. • Organize field trips to help make learning more relevant. • Organize an incentive program to help youth to track their progress. • Plan Attendance Breakfasts. • Recognize youth during announcements (once per quarter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase the number of hours that youth spend in high-quality and engaging activities before, during and/or after school</i> • <i>Increase the number of significant, caring adult relationships experienced by all youth.</i> Adult volunteers commit to serving at least 30 hours. • <i>Engage youth in meaningful service-learning or civic engagement activities, for a minimum of 20 hours per youth.</i>
<i>Behavior</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a lunchtime mentoring program which focuses on leadership development. • Develop youth ambassador program/youth-led peer mediation program. • Recognize positive behavior at school assemblies. • Organize one time service project for Family Night. • Encourage single school and afterschool culture for rules and expectations 	
<i>Coursework & Academic Support in Core Subjects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect service projects in afterschool programs to classroom instruction; connect youth with a mentor to help with math and/or reading skills • Incorporate everyday math/reading games into afterschool programming. • Provide individual or small group academic support in the classroom, specifically directed reading interventions or/and corrective math support. 	

Outcomes Measured: Academic Performance (grades, GPA, failing grades, NWEA); Attendance (absences); Behavior; Increased Civic Engagement (Alliance survey)

