



AmeriCorps Promise Fellow 18-19 Member Initiated Hours FAQ

What are Member Initiated Hours (MIH)?

Service and training activities the member independently identifies and pursues unassociated to their program, service site(s) and the primary duties of their position to find additional hours. These trainings and activities must inform the member's service, but are not requirements of service and should be a small portion of overall hours. An example would be volunteering at a local organization's after school club after service at the host site is over. The host site does not require the member to volunteer at the organization as part of their service, but it was independently identified by the member and will be a caring adult for young people in 6th-12th, supporting the Promise Fellow model.

Creating a MIH plan is a supplemental option for members in need of more hours and should not replace regular service duties/hours commitment to your site. Note: For the first month of service, members cannot perform any MIH until they are trained on the process.

How to I request and get approval for Member Initiated Hours?

Promise Fellows are encouraged to discuss possible MIH activities with their Alliance trainer and site supervisor to determine if they fit within the Promise Fellow model first and then can request a MIH plan from their Trainer. Members will be asked to complete all required information for each Member Initiated Hours activity in the form, review with their supervisor, both parties will sign and submit to the Trainer for review. A completed MIH plan must be submitted to the Alliance for pre-approval before members can engage in any activities. Once reviewed, the Alliance will confirm with the member and supervisor if the MIH plan has been approved and when the member can start participating in these MIH activities.

How do I record Member Initiated Hours?

Once served, the pre-approved Member Initiated Hours are reported in your timesheet. The hours should be reported under the service category if it is a service activity, or under the training category if it is a training. The description in the timesheet for that day must include that the activity is "Member Initiated Hours" (or "MIH") and include the specific name of activity (as it appears in the request form). For example: *"Supported after school programming at parks and rec - MIH"* as service hours or *"Attended UMN conference on youth development (MIH)"* as training hours.

Why are members required to request all Member Initiate Hours?

AmeriCorps requires programs to have clear policies in place to verify any Member Initiated Hours. Supervisors are directed to review and verify all hours in timesheets with the contact information provided in the MIH plan or reject any hours that they cannot verify a member served. During a program audit, members and supervisors may be required to submit documentation of pre-approval for all Member Initiated Hours.

About how many hours could I have in each training category?

Total training hours are limited to 20% of your total hours for the term of service, which is approximately 344 hours for full-term members (240 for reduced-time, 180 for half-term members). There are several types of training hours and they all count towards the 20% maximum. Approximate hour range for each type listed below listed for full-term members.

Alliance Required trainings = 70 hours

Alliance Optional trainings = up to 40 hours

Host Site Required and Optional Training = as determined by your site

Member Initiated Training = as approved by your supervisor and Alliance staff

Life After AmeriCorps training = Maximum 20 hours

Can I count time spent volunteering at community organizations?

Yes. If the volunteering activity supports your focus list students and has been approved by your supervisor, you do not need a MIH plan. However, if the activity relates to service or the Promise Fellow model but does not directly support focus list students, you do need a Member Initiated Hours plan. If a MIH plan is needed, members will include the date(s) of occurrence, organization name, first and last name of an appropriate contact at the organization, and a valid phone and/or email address for the contact.

Can a Community Ed, Undergraduate, or Graduate class and homework count as Member Initiated Training Hours?

Maybe. Attending a class can count as Member Initiated training hours if it is directly related to your service. Promise Fellows must receive written pre-approval from their host site supervisor and the Alliance through the Member Initiated Hours plan. The request must include the name the course, institution, instructor, and outline the objective of the course as it relates to your service. Only class time will be counted, homework time cannot be counted as hours.

I'm busy during the school day, can I do student data OnCorps tracking off-site?

Yes. Members are allowed to serve telecommuting and/or off-site hours that *directly relate to the primary duties of their position* (see Independent Service Hour Blanket Policy). These hours can include OnCorps tracking, program planning, or Alliance provided trainings. Members are expected to schedule all off-site hours with their supervisors in advance for approval and easy verification, but do not need to seek approval for OnCorps tracking or Alliance trainings through a MIH plan.

Can I count time spent reading relevant books, articles, or watching webinars?

Host sites can direct Promise Fellows to read books/articles or complete webinars that help to inform a member's service or prepare them for service requirements as part of your 20% training hours. Supervisor-directed activities do not require a Member Initiated Hours plan to be completed. See Telecommuting/Off-Site & Life After AmeriCorps handout for details on how to record in your timesheet.

Can I count time spent conducting informational interviews?

Promise Fellows may count up to 20 hours preparing for Life After AmeriCorps. Members do not need to complete a Member Initiated Hours plan for Life After AmeriCorps hours; however, any hours served off-site must be pre-approved by your supervisor and recorded in the Life After AmeriCorps category on the timesheet. See Telecommuting/Off-Site & Life After AmeriCorps handout for details.

Can I count standardized test prep hours (GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)?

Yes, Promise Fellows must receive pre-approval from their host site supervisor (in order for the supervisor to be able to confidently approve those hours on timesheets), but do not need to complete a Member Initiated Hours plan as this is part of the list of Life After AmeriCorps activities list. This activity counts towards your total 20 hours of Life After AmeriCorps hours and must be recorded in that timesheet category.

What else can I do for Life After AmeriCorps?

With pre-approval from supervisors for any off-site hours, members can do: resume work, standardized test prep, informational interviews, job searching and interviewing, applying for scholarships or financial aid, researching and applying for college or graduate programs, or professional networking events. All activities counts towards your total 20 hours of Life After AmeriCorps hours and must be recorded in that timesheet category. See Telecommuting/Off-Site & Life After AmeriCorps handout for details.