

Capacity Building:

A Resource Guide For Bonner Programs

Introduction

Through Bonner Programs around the nation, Bonner Scholars and Leaders are engaged to work with non-profit, governmental, and education partners. Additionally, centers and programs engage other students, faculty, and stakeholders from across campus in addressing the unmet needs of local community partners and assisting in their organizations' programs. Because students can be involved with the same partners for multiple semesters and even years, they can take on a variety of roles and projects. These capacity-building roles often involve more complex program, organizational, and project development functions, such as curriculum development and resource development. This resource guide provides some useful steps and resources to help you expand these opportunities for your students and community partners.

Capacity Building Activities

The Corporation for National and Community Service defines three kinds of capacity building activities:

- **Efficiency / Efficacy:** Improved outcomes with the same level of resources or improved or consistent quality of services with fewer resources;
- **Scale/Reach:** Number of new people served, new populations served, and/or new or expanded services;
- **Leverage:** Additional resources or assets garnered through capacity-building activities such as funding, volunteers, in-kind support, and partnerships.

After reviewing the CNCS definitions and also current Bonner student service position descriptions that feature capacity building roles, the Bonner Foundation and Network identified a set of activities in five capacity building areas:

- **Volunteer Management:** coordinating/managing service program, volunteer recruitment
- **Program Development:** improving existing or developing new programs, writing training manuals, organizing training workshops
- **Fundraising:** organizing events, identifying grant and funding sources, writing grants
- **Communications:** website and social media development, coordinate meetings, online networking support
- **Research:** community-based research, policy research

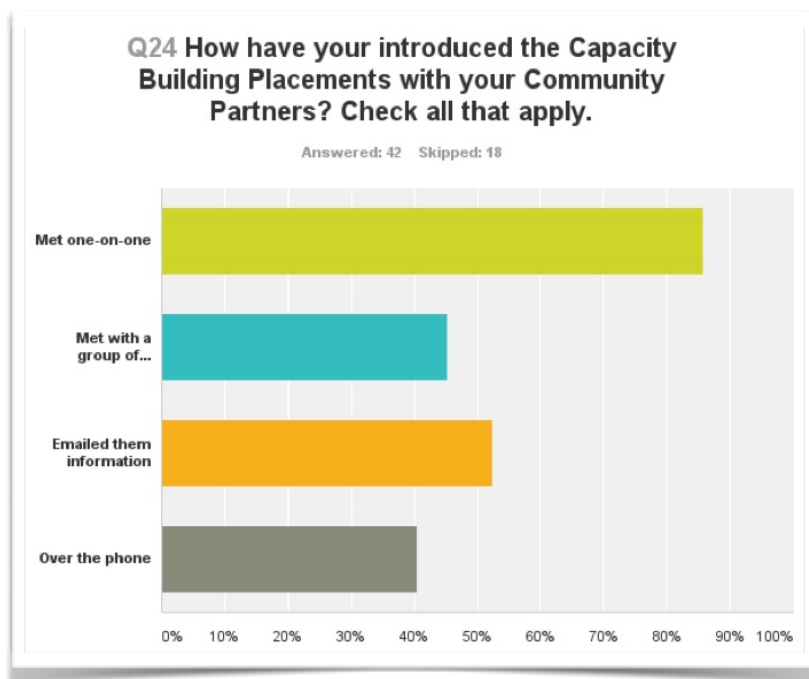
Some Useful Steps and Resources

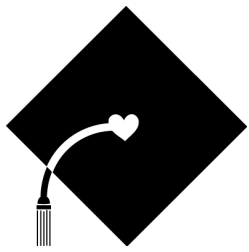
These resources draw on the experience of programs and staff who have shared helpful processes for discussing capacity-building needs and projects with community partners and students. You'll find some **helpful resources**. According to the survey of Bonner staff, most programs have relied on one-on-one meetings, but nearly half have used a group meeting (multiple partners, by issue or by scheduling). Regardless, the steps here may help you think through the process.

These materials are based on the whole implementation process, while in practice, staff may be in the middle of the process already. This guide builds on the our introductory ["Guide to Capacity Building Positions"](#) on the Bonner wiki. Even if you've already started this process for this school year, we hope you'll find some useful information in the pages that follow, including how to enter the opportunities and accomplishments into BWBRS for each of your primary community partners.

Summary of Implementation Steps

1. **Decide how to integrate** the capacity building focus into your current structure of communication and position development with community partners.
2. **Develop a calendar** for your meetings and conversations with partners, and set up the meetings.
3. **Think through, customize, and prepare the materials and approach** you'll use in meetings with partners.
4. **Conduct the meeting(s) or conversation(s) using the Opportunities form** to introduce partners to the capacity building focus and gather their specific requests for assistance.
5. **Prepare to have these same conversations and meetings with Bonner students.** We recommend that you integrate this into site team meetings or class-based meetings (i.e., separate meetings with sophomores, juniors, seniors).
6. **Translate the project needs and ideas into positions.** Finalize the capacity-building projects and positions. Use handouts in this guide.
7. **Add the information from the completed surveys into BWBRS** (using the step-by-step guide for [Adding Capacity Building Opportunities Survey to BWBRS](#)). Student interns can help here.
8. **Make sure that you have a plan for collecting the Accomplishments** at the end of the term, using the same form. Remind partners to keep track of this from an agency-level view.
9. **Collect the Accomplishments and input them** (or review what partners input) in BWBRS (using the step-by-step guide for [Adding Capacity Building Accomplishment Surveys to BWBRS.](#))





Capacity Building:

Suggested Implementation Steps

1

In advance, decide how to integrate the capacity building focus (and forms) into your current structure of communication and position development with partners.

You'll also want to think through how to collect the completed Capacity Building Opportunities forms from partners and input the information into BWBRS. Typically, Coordinators are the lead on this, but some may be involving student team leaders. Throughout the Bonner Network, many staff have begun these meetings and conversations with partners. Some staff are doing group meetings (retreats or sessions) with community partners. Others are doing this through one-to-one meetings in person (or even on the phone).

Some programs start this way before the term begins. For instance, Macalester College's Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby began the process in January 2014 by meeting with partners to discuss the integration of capacity-building projects. She completed this process in April, 2014 for positions that would start in September, 2014.

Goal for Fall 2014: The goal for Fall 2014 is to complete this process with committed partners (i.e., those that host Bonners in regular positions each term or deep partners) by mid-December 2014 and to collect the Fall accomplishments by January 31, 2015.

Goal for Spring and Summer 2015: We recommend you define now the process you'll follow for spring partners that may not be fall partners. These completed Capacity Building Forms should be entered into BWBRS by February 2015. For summer partners, this may need to involve students who are meeting with potential summer partners on their own. The completed forms (requests) and positions should be entered by April 2015.

Resources for you

Capacity Building Form: The 2-page form is a simple checklist. Get familiar with its contents.

Organizational Capacity-Building Opportunities

Please check the appropriate items and provide a brief description of opportunities for students to provide capacity-building support for your organization. We will do our best to identify student interns who can fill these role(s) in the coming school year and/or summer terms.

I. Volunteer Management

Coordinating/managing service program:

- ☐ program coordination/management
- ☐ improve systems for volunteer supervision
- ☐ train staff to work with volunteers
- ☐ improve volunteer tracking
- ☐ update volunteer training/curriculum
- ☐ update volunteer policies and procedures
- ☐ evaluate volunteer program
- ☐ implement a volunteer impact assessment

Volunteer Recruitment:

- ☐ improve volunteer recruitment plan
- ☐ recruiting community volunteers
- ☐ recruiting student volunteers
- ☐ volunteer recognition activities
- ☐ improve volunteer placement system
- ☐ volunteer communication tools

Please describe:

II. Training and Program Development

- ☐ organize staff or volunteer training workshops
- ☐ develop new training modules
- ☐ develop curriculum for new or existing program(s)
- ☐ develop operations manual for new or existing program(s)
- ☐ develop or implement new program

Please describe:

1 / 2

Develop a strategy and calendar for your meetings and conversations with partners, and set up the meetings.

You'll want to determine a strategy for how you will meet with partners (ideally in person) one-on-one or in a group session. For example, while Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby at

Macalester College began this process last winter for this fall's positions, this fall she will be conducting site visits for next year's partnerships and positions. This helped to affirm how positions can be developmental since students stay at their sites for multiple years. This really helps sophomores, for example, and their supervisors to students so that they can begin to articulate a trajectory for their work at the site. This should be linked to one-one-one conversations and advising between the student and the supervisor and the student and the Bonner Coordinator.

This connects, also, to a later step, where the Coordinator can lead a training session on positions with the students (i.e., the sophomore class).

Timeline for Fall 2014: In order to complete the process (including input to BWBRS) by mid-December 2014 for existing partners, your program should complete all meetings and conversations by that point.

Timeline for Spring 2015: We recommend you build meetings or check ins with spring partners over the winter. Advance positions that have already been finalized and approved (reviewed) if possible.

Timeline for Summer 2015: In order to finalize summer positions by April 2015, programs should determine a strategy for carrying out this process with potential summer hosts for Bonner Scholars and Leaders. Remember, you'll need to confirm that organizations are non-profits. Your strategy may need to include communicating with organization staff via email and online platforms.

Recommendations for you

- Review BWBRS to make a list of which partners you need to meet with or contact. Use this worksheet (next page).
- Develop a calendar or work plan for all of your site visits or schedule a partner retreat or group meeting.
- Consider using a platform like Google Calendar or Basecamp (www.basecamp.org) for its calendar planning functions.

Partner Meeting Worksheet:

List the partners you need to have meetings with and the status (i.e., date, approach). If possible, divide up the meetings amongst staff/student leaders.

[illegible]

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List the partners you need to have meetings with and the status (i.e., date, approach). If possible, divide up the meetings amongst staff/student leaders.

[illegible]

3

Think through, customize and prepare the materials and approach you'll use in meetings with partners.

In general, the purpose of the meeting is to:

- Refresh the partners about the Bonner student developmental model
- Revisit the goals of the partnership
- Introduce the capacity building framework and goals
- Have partners complete the Opportunities form and consider their needs
- Help partners think about how to translate their responses into real positions or projects for students who are serving with them or could serve with them
- Remember that research opportunities will make ideal connections with faculty and academic courses

Timeline for Fall 2014: To meet the goal of completing this process (including input to BWBRS) by mid-December 2014 for existing partners, here are some recommended steps, drawing on the resources below.

Send partners an email/letter with the following:

- 1) Customized power-point on Capacity Building
- 2) (Customized) Capacity Building Form
- 3) Instructions for returning the form to you (via email or even by logging onto BWBRS).

Process for Spring and Summer 2015: Once you figure out your calendar and approach, you'll want to conduct the same outreach and communication with spring and summer partners.

Resources for you

- **Sample PowerPoint** slides presentation for Community Partners (*see next page and download template*)
- **Customized Capacity Building Form** (i.e., Do you want to add your logo or another category? For example, Macalester added some other items on partnership development). In the example to the right, Macalester added their logo for the Bonner Program and a few items on partnership building.



The image shows a portion of a form. At the top left is a red and black logo featuring a graduation cap and a grid pattern. To the right of the logo is the text 'Please describe:'. Below this is a section header 'VI. Collaboration/Partnership Building' in a grey box. Underneath are two checkboxes: 'identify partners and/or stakeholders' and 'organize/facilitate meetings' on the left, and 'build and maintain' on the right.

- **Tips Handout for how to translate needs into a position**, drawing on capacity building needs

Sample PowerPoint Handout & Process

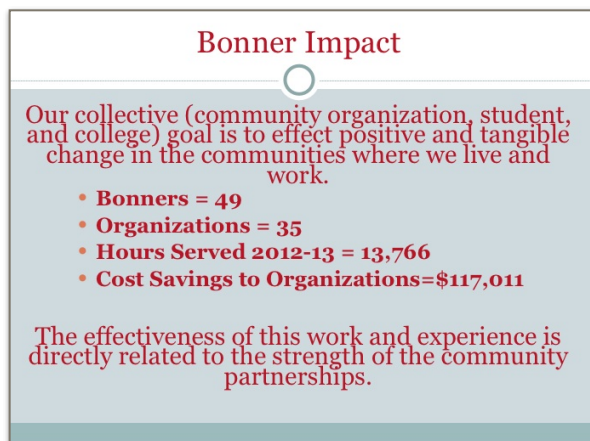
Some programs have developed slides to use with partners. This can be done in a meeting or via email. The screen shots below explain the slides and workshop, which were developed for a workshop with partners. The Bonner Foundation has extrapolated from this to create a template for you to use, adding some other slides used to explain the concepts. ***You can customize your own using this template (download here).***



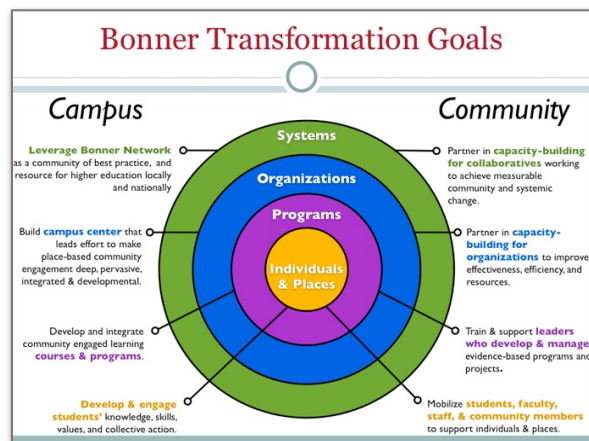
1. Introduction



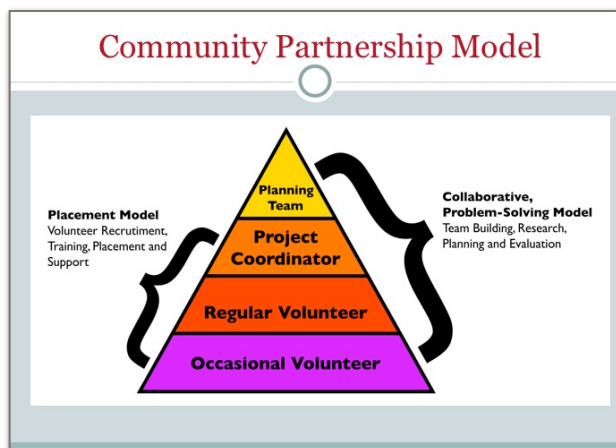
2. Overview of the Meeting (or slides, if emailed)



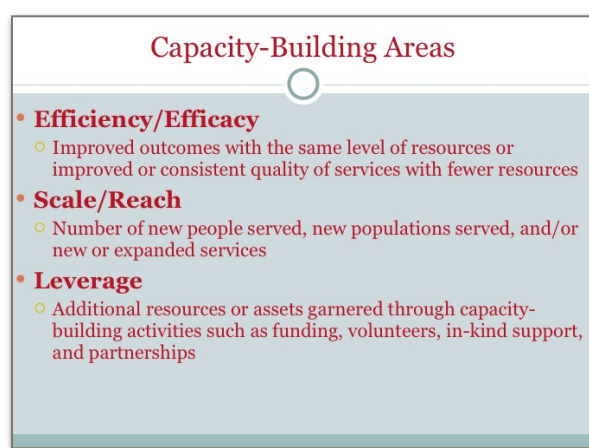
3. Share your programs impact



4. Introduce transformational goals



5. Revisit the partnership model



6. Introduce capacity building goals. Discuss how they apply.

Capacity-Building Activities

- **Volunteer Management**
 - coordinate/manage service program, volunteer recruitment
- **Training and Program Development**
 - coordinate programs, develop new programs, write training manuals, organize/lead training workshops
- **Fundraising**
 - organize events, identify grant and funding sources, write grants
- **Communications**
 - website and social media development, coordinate meetings, online networking support; create print marketing materials
- **Research**
 - community-based research, policy research
- **Collaboration/Partnership Building**
 - Identify partners and/or stakeholders, organize/facilitate meetings, build and maintain relationship

Level 1 Placements: Occasional Volunteer

EXPLORATION

Introductory experience to issues, organizations, & Twin Cities

- **Placement: direct service**
 - Entry-level, room for exploration, training, coaching, and guidance.
- **Placement: Classroom Assistant** in local public schools
- **Work: small group/1:1 tutoring, book/math clubs, assistance at school events**
- **Bonner Activities: Service Trip**
 - 1 week course/immersion experience in New Orleans

7. Introduce capacity building activities. Have partners follow along with form, noting their needs.

8. Revisit the student developmental model, using examples from your program. Work through thinking about the students.

Level 2 Placements: Regular Volunteer

EXPERIENCE

Focus on a particular issue, agency, and/or neighborhood. Opportunity to gain experience, learn about the organization, and understand roles & responsibilities

- **Placement: direct service, organizational, project planning**
 - Students need direction
 - Build in opportunities for students to take initiative
 - Adjust based on knowledge/skill level of student
- **Placement: students apply to 3 organizations as first years**
- **Bonner Activities: Sophomore Exchange. Eligible for Summer of Service. Bonner Recommitment.**
- **Work: tutoring/mentoring, curriculum design, program planning**

Level 3 Placements: Site/Project Coordinator

EXAMPLE

Increased focus on issue, agency, and/or neighborhood. Increased level of responsibility, skill-building, introduction into advocacy/policy

- **Placement: project/site coordinator, coordinating student/non-student volunteers**
 - Student has risen into position through previous work experience
 - Student may need special training
- **Placement: same site may work for different department or different site same issue**
- **Bonner Activities: Summer of Service. Study Abroad.**
- **Work: recruiting, planning, organizing, managing, and/or implementing projects/programs.**

Level 4 Placements: Project Leader/Specialist

EXPERTISE

Deep engagement with an issue, agency, and/or neighborhood. High level of responsibility, research, advocacy and/or policy.

- **Placement: strategic planning, key initiatives with the student in a leadership role**
- **Placement: same site may work for different department or different site same issue**
 - Transition towards post-grad opportunities
- **Work: program management or implementation (e.g., teaching, curriculum development, project design), research, program design, and planning**
 - academic connections, community-based research
- **Bonner Activities: Senior Presentation of Learning, Capstone.**

9. As you touch on each level, prompt partners to think about how the students that work with them (or could) might take on these roles.

Expectations

- **Review Current Position Description**
- **Complete "Organizational Capacity-Building Opportunities" Form**
- **Determine Organizational/Program Priorities and Needs (use form as a basis, brainstorm with organization staff if needed)**
- **Narrow down opportunities to 2-3**
- **Remember this is a collaborative process w/Bonner and you/the organization. When your student returns:**
 - Discuss: Passions and interests of the student (strengths handout)
 - Ask: What gaps does the student see in programming or at the org? What suggestions do they have for addressing?
 - Match: student interests w/organizational need. Review your narrowed down opportunities list with student.
- **Write job description. Review with student. Modify if necessary.**
- **Submit to Consuelo on FRIDAY, MARCH 28**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK WITH
MACALESTER AND THE BONNER
STUDENTS.

WE TRULY APPRECIATE THE TIME,
ENERGY, AND THOUGHT YOU HAVE PUT
INTO BUILDING AND SUSTAINING THIS
PARTNERSHIP!

10. Share and discuss the next steps and timeline, including for how partners should review their forms and ideas with Bonner students. Discuss how to narrow down to positions and make matches. Discuss how partners should communicate positions back to staff. Thanks and celebrate!

4

Conduct the meeting(s), phone conversation(s), or outreach by email. Guide partners through the consideration of what capacity building projects might benefit their work.

Here are some other tips, especially if you are doing this in a meeting.

- Have experienced partners present examples of how students have taken on these capacity-building projects, especially higher level positions. Inspire each other with real stories.
- The group meeting also allows multiple representatives from sites (if that is the case) work together and can foster connections across sites. Hence, as the slides show, the meeting is a “working” session, and partners walk away with more concrete ideas for students’ positions.
- As you close the meeting (or communication), guide the partners to look through their completed form and think about the students they really have at the site as a first step (especially if you hope to ensure that all Bonners have these positions). They can narrow down their ideas to those that are doable by these students, again with developmental progressions in mind.
- If you hope to connect partners with other student volunteers or even faculty, you might layer in steps or a discussion of how this might happen. (For instance, introduce partners to other service groups on campus or set up another meeting or communication to discuss CBR projects. **See resources here [LINK].**
- Make sure to cover how and when partners should finalize their position requests. See next steps and handout for this. **If time, review the handout (see page X).**
- If you have your partners using BWBRS, you may want to integrate a step of having them logon (with your guidance) and complete the form within BWBRS. If you don’t, make sure your plan includes how to collect this information so you can add it into BWBRS. For instance, at Macalester, Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby used a Google Form survey. After the meeting with 10-15 partners, she followed up with an email with the survey link. After partners completed their position requests in the survey, with the help of student interns, they moved this information into BWBRS. **(If you want to use this approach, here is a template for the survey).**

Resources for you

- Video with partners from Macalester College, who helped to lead the session by sharing examples, talking about their perspectives on capacity-building. This might help you to target partners for such a role.
- Template for Google Survey. If you have partners actively using BWBRS, it may be more efficient to have them input positions or the form there.

5

Prepare to have these same conversations and meetings with Bonner students. You may want to integrate this focus into class-based meetings (i.e., separate meetings with sophomores, juniors, seniors).

The purpose of the meeting is NOT to have students finalize the position (on their own). Rather, it is to prepare them for their collaborative work with partners that will result in these positions and to:

- Introduce the capacity building framework and goals.
- Become comfortable with the language and focus and how it fits not only with the Bonner Program but also with the non-profit sector.
- Have students be aware of the form and think about their knowledge of the partners' organization and work.
- Help students prepare for their conversations with partners and have ideas about how they might engage with them.
- Be ready to discuss how their work with the partners meshes with other aspects of their college experience, like their academic study and personal development.
- Work through the worksheet with students and empower them to be helpful in this process.

For example, at Macalester, Consuelo shared the form with the students and let them know that partners would be completing it. She prompted them to think about their understanding of the site's needs and how this work might integrate with their positions.

Consuelo found that students and partners were typically on the same page as they thought through their own work. This led to more co-creation and collaborative work. For example, if both the partner and student had common areas identified, they then got into conversations about how these projects could take shape.

Resources for you

Capacity Building 101 Trainer Guide for the Class Meeting which you might find helpful for how to structure the meeting with students. This includes a handout for guiding the discussion between the partner and student.

6

Translate the project needs and ideas into positions. Finalize the capacity-building projects and positions.

Here are three questions that might help you and the partner to finalize the positions. See other helpful questions on the complete handout.

- 1) Given the students (especially Bonners) who are currently working with your organization, what are 2-3 items or ideas from the Capacity Building Form that best match the capabilities and interests of those individual students? Cluster 2-3 related ideas or roles into one position, basing the final description on a realistic assessment of the time (hours and weeks) that the student will be with the site.
- 2) Considering students' development and growth over time, draft 2-3 ideal positions that you (as partner) would like to discuss with the program and institution. We can draft some positions that students can grow into or even identify other student volunteers (or faculty) for specific projects.
- 3) What are the top needs right now? What sequence of positions and projects are needed by your agency or program in order to optimize its work?

7

Add the information into BWBRS using the step-by-step guide for [Adding Capacity Building Opportunities Survey to BWBRS](#).

Student interns can help here. Other options that programs have tried to input the positions include:

- 1) **Have partners input their completed forms directly** into BWBRS (if they are currently logging on, for e-signatures) and then review it (and improve it) to meeting Bonner Foundation guidelines. You can email them these instructions: [Adding Capacity Building Opportunities Survey to BWBRS](#).
- 2) **Email partners a Capacity Building Form** (as a Word doc) and have them email it back to you completed. Then, review forms and help translate into positions. Finalize and input positions into BWBRS. If you use emails, a spreadsheet, or a Google Form, cut and paste, editing descriptions.
- 3) **Try to use narrative that concisely describes the specific projects** or roles that the partner would like. You may want to note specific positions. For instance, you might state something like "A Student Program Coordinator will develop a volunteer training handbook and recruit additional student volunteers" or "The PolicyOptions Team (two students) will research three model organizations, propose recommendations, and write an issue brief."

Resources for you

Complete Handout with guidelines and sample position descriptions, found on next page. You may just want to email this to partners (as well).

Developing Strong Capacity Building Positions

Thanks for completing the Capacity Building Form. This two-page handout covers some tips to help your organization, school, or agency to translate capacity building needs into positions. Page 1 covers some questions to guide your thinking. Page 2 covers tips for narrowing and finalizing this term's positions.

#1: Consider your organization's biggest needs or opportunities. Here are some questions to ask as you review the Capacity Building Opportunities Form with us.

- **Top needs or opportunities:** What is your organization/program's major "wish list" or top 3 needs?
- **Leverage:** How can the students at your site help build a deeper connection between your organization/program and the resources of the college? (i.e., recruit volunteers, connect to faculty help, research information you need, etc.)
- **Connect:** How can the students at your site help your organization/program tap into other resources in the surrounding community (or network of organizations) that might benefit your programs?
- **Focus Areas:** As you think about your non-profit organization, what are the organizational capacity areas that most need attention or strengthening?
- **Balance:** How can you develop each position to balance direct service roles (i.e., program delivery) with higher-level responsibilities (i.e., thinking work) that could benefit your organization and its programs?
- **Long-term:** What are your organization's long-term goals and how does this position help move the organization in that direction?

#2: Now think about students' developmental progression and the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to successfully work with your programs.

- **Learning:** How can each position have a balance between program goals and the potential learning experience for the Bonner student?
- **Experience:** Does the Bonner/student need previous experience to do this job? If so what is needed?
- **Realistic:** Is the work realistic for a semester or a year long time frame 6-8 hours a week?
- **Skills:** What skills and/or experiences will the Bonner gain in building their resume and professional development?
- **Team:** Is there capacity to have a "team" of students at the site? What role can the Bonner/student leader play in developing and or leading this charge?
- **Sequence:** How will you build in transition (think when the student leaves or graduates)? What role does the student play in getting your organization ready to sustain the work or hand it off?

Translating Opportunities into Positions

To finalize and narrow your positions, you might find this questions helpful:

- Given the students (especially Bonners) who are currently working with your organization, what are two or three requests from the Capacity Building Opportunities Form that best match the capabilities and interests of those individual students? Cluster related ideas or roles into one position, basing the final description on a realistic assessment of the time (hours and weeks) that the student will be with the site.
- Considering students' development and growth over time, draft 2-3 ideal positions that you (as partner) would like to discuss with the program and institution. We can draft some positions that students can grow into or work to identify other student volunteers (or faculty) for specific projects.
- What are the top needs right now? What sequence of positions and projects are needed by your agency or program in order to optimize its work?

Some guidelines for translating into final positions.

- 1) **The first sentence should capture the mission and program** of the non-profit agency or school. Use the organization's website or materials for help. If available or needed, cite specific details about the population served or programs offered (but not in too much detail).
- 2) **Another 2-3 sentences should then describe the position**, making it clear what the roles of the student are. Keep it professional and concise.
- 3) End the description with a final sentence that begins **"The capacity building activities in this position include..."** and then notes 2-3 specific bullets, drawing from form.
- 4) **Make sure the title is active and uses resume language** like "Program Coordinator", "Program Assistant," "Events Manager, and so on. Avoid vague terms like "volunteer."
- 5) **Avoid language that focuses on any administrative work** (i.e., paperwork, filing, answering phones). We understand this is a part of positions, but not every detail needs to be stated.
- 6) If position must be **eligible for AmeriCorps**, make sure to avoid too many details that raise scrutiny. You may want to add caveat statements such as:
 - This position does not displace a paid employee.
 - An AmeriCorps member cannot log more than 10% of total hours in fundraising.
 - This position does not involve religious proselytizing.

Example: Program Coordinator (CB)

The American Red Cross has been the nation's premier emergency response organization. In addition to domestic disaster relief, this nonprofit organization offers services in five areas: community services that help the needy; support and comfort for military members and their families; collection, processing and distribution of blood; educational programs that promote health and safety; and international relief and development programs. This Program Coordinator will develop and coordinate events such as blood drives, distribution of resources, CPR trainings, etc. The member will also recruit, train and manage a group of college-age volunteers that will implement these events on behalf of the Red Cross. Capacity building activities for this position include volunteer recruitment, training and management; meeting logistics and event development.

For other examples, visit this webpage: [Awesome Bonner Capacity Building Positions](#).

8

Make sure that you have a plan for collecting the Accomplishments at the end of the term. Remind partner to track information.

Remember that the partner will be asked what was completed. However, this will be summative for the organization as a whole, not by student or position. Below is a screen shot of what this looks like in BWBRS.

9

Collect the Accomplishments at the end of the term and input them (or review what partners input) using the step-by-step guide for Adding Capacity Building Accomplishment Surveys to BWBRS.

For example, if the Boys & Girls Club had three students, each of them may have completed relevant capacity-building projects. But the B&G Club only needs to report for the organization as a whole. The form allows the partner to specify this.

On reflection, the site supervisor might note things like:

- 1 volunteer program developed and policies updated
- 15 volunteers recruited
- 2 new curriculum modules developed
- 2 grant proposals developed (by different students)
- 1 web page developed
- 2 issue briefs written

You'll need to enter relevant details by category. For example, under Volunteer Management, you (or the partner) could note: "Volunteer program developed and policies updated. 15 volunteers recruited."

The goal is that for Fall 2014, these Accomplishments will be entered by February 2015 for fall positions.