VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

ECO AmeriCorps

On behalf of the staff of the ECO AmeriCorps program, Welcome Aboard!

The ECO AmeriCorps management team consists of:

Carey Hengstenberg 802.595-1632 carey.hengstenberg@vermont.gov

Carey is the Program Director and is also the DEC's Planning Manager. She is not dedicated full time to the program. She works closely with Dustin to ensure that all of your needs are being met throughout the service term. Her primary role is to ensure the program is running effectively and efficiently. She works with members, the organizations and supervisors, and our grantors to maximize the impact of the program and to make certain the AmeriCorps experience is a positive one.

Dustin Bowman 802.461.5222 dustin.bowman@vermont.gov

Dustin is the Program Coordinator. He is the primary point of contact for our program. He is an AmeriCorps alum, and has experience managing sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency and solar energy programs in New York and Vermont and has a proven track record of cultivating successful partnerships through community collaboration. He is the lead on host site and member recruitment and support, organizing our annual training calendar, planner of ECO's development and marketing strategy and ensuring that the program is administered in compliance with our grantor's requirements.

Bonnie Woodford 802-522-7648 bonnie.woodford@vermont.gov

Bonnie originally joined ECO AmeriCorps as a member during the 2016-2017 Service Year, and more recently joined the team in May to assist with member recruitment and placement; and assisting in all aspects of program operations. Bonnie will be with the program for several months during the service term providing support to members and host sites. If you are confused about a requirement or can't find a form – call Bonnie!

Hannah Yates 802.249.1362 hannah.yates@partner.vermont.gov

Hannah is your team leader, and an ECO AmeriCorps member herself. She will help organize service days and other events, make connections between you and community resources /opportunities, and help tell the story of the service we'll be doing. Hannah will work closely with you this year to ensure all are having the best and most effective experience possible.

We are all here to assist and support you in your service. Do not hesitate to contact any of us at any time for any reason.

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What is AmeriCorps?

Section 1

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps engages more than 80,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country.

Since the program's founding in 1994, more than 1,000,000 AmeriCorps members have contributed more than 1.4 billion hours in service across America while tackling pressing problems and mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve.

AmeriCorps Core Values

- Strengthening Communities
- Encouraging Responsibility
- Expanding Opportunities
- Getting Things Done

The AmeriCorps Pledge

I will get things done for America -
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy,
I will take action.

Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity,
I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.

Wondering what to expect from your AmeriCorps service?

AmeriCorps is an Opportunity

Joining AmeriCorps is a way to put your idealism into action. As an AmeriCorps member, you can help make the world a better place: help children learn, protect the environment, or bring needed services to a low-income community. There are opportunities in AmeriCorps for anyone who is willing to do something unique and exciting.

AmeriCorps is an Experience

AmeriCorps is a real-life education and work experience wrapped into one. As a member, you will learn teamwork, leadership, responsibility and other essential skills that will help you for the rest of your life. And you will gain the personal satisfaction that comes with taking on challenges and seeing the results of your efforts.

AmeriCorps Offers Tangible Benefits

Most AmeriCorps members receive student loan deferment, and training, and may receive a living allowance and health insurance. After you complete your term of service, you will also receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans.

AmeriCorps Programs

AmeriCorps programs do more than move communities forward; they serve their members by creating jobs and providing pathways to opportunity for young people entering the workforce. AmeriCorps places thousands of young adults into intensive service positions where they learn valuable work skills, earn money for education, and develop an appreciation for citizenship.

AmeriCorps State and National

This is the broadest network of AmeriCorps programs. These groups recruit, train, and place AmeriCorps members to meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

AmeriCorps VISTA

VISTA provides full-time members to nonprofit, 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 and FEMA Corps

AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps are full-time, team-based, residential programs for men and women ages 18-24. NCCC's mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service, while FEMA Corps focuses on Disaster Relief.

AmeriCorps

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Getting Things Done for America

AmeriCorps engages more than 80,000 men and women in intensive service each year at more than 21,000 locations including nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. AmeriCorps members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Members gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the members and the communities they serve.

AmeriCorps consists of three main programs: the state and national AmeriCorps program, whose members serve with nonprofit and community groups across the country; AmeriCorps VISTA, through which members serve full-time addressing poverty and building the capacity of nonprofit organizations; and AmeriCorps NCCC, a team-based residential program for young adults 18-24 who serve in public safety, the environment, youth development, and disaster relief and preparedness.

AmeriCorps By the Numbers

- Engages more than **80,000 members** annually
- Members serve at **21,000 locations** across the country
- Mobilizes **millions of volunteers** annually
- Leverages more than **$1 billion** in outside funding and donations every year
- More than **1 Million Americans** have served since 1994

AmeriCorps.gov March 2017

Strengthening Nonprofits and the Volunteer Sector

Strengthening nonprofits: AmeriCorps members help faith-based and community groups expand services, build capacity, raise funds, develop new partnerships, and create innovative, sustainable programs.
Encouraging competition and local control: AmeriCorps pushes funding and decision-making to the state and local level. Most grantees are chosen by bipartisan state commissions appointed by the governor.
Advancing social innovation: AmeriCorps invests in entrepreneurial organizations that have been recognized for their innovative approaches to citizen problem-solving such as Citizen Schools, City Year, Experience Corps, Teach For America, and YouthBuild.

Expanding Educational Opportunity and Building Future Leaders

Expanding educational opportunity: In exchange for a year of full-time service, AmeriCorps members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (equal to the maximum Pell Grant) that helps pay for college or pay back student loans. AmeriCorps members have earned more than $3.3 billion in these awards since 1994.

Preparing the 21st Century Workforce: AmeriCorps is a pathway to economic opportunity that provides members with valuable skills specific to their service (construction, teaching, weatherization, etc.) as well as general skills of leadership and problem-solving that all employers are looking for.

Creating future leaders: AmeriCorps members gain new and useful skills, advance their education, and become more connected to their communities. A longitudinal study has shown that AmeriCorps alumni are more likely to be civically engaged, to go into public service careers—such as teaching, public safety, social work, and military service—and to volunteer in their communities.

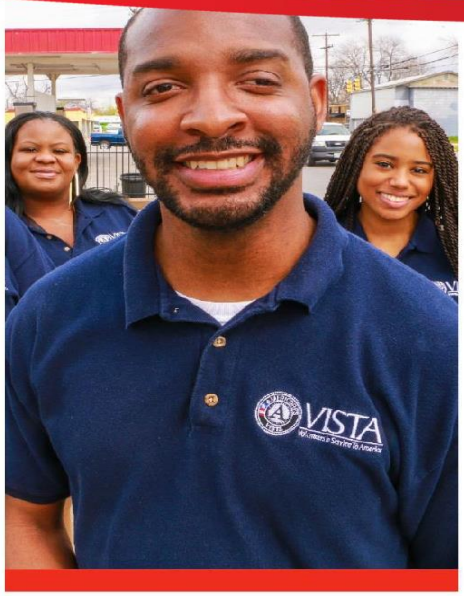
Leveraging a Powerful Return on Investment

Public private partnerships: AmeriCorps leverages substantial private investment—more than $480 million in non-CNCS funds each year from businesses, foundations, and other sources. AmeriCorps has cut costs and become more efficient by supporting more members with fewer federal dollars.

Mobilizing volunteers: AmeriCorps is a powerful catalyst and force-multiplier for community volunteering. In 2015 AmeriCorps members recruited, trained, and supervised more than 2.3 million community volunteers for the organizations they serve.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE



Getting Things Done for America

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) engages more than 8,000 individuals annually to support community efforts to overcome poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time for a year at nonprofit organizations or local government agencies to build the capacity of these organizations to carry out programs that alleviate poverty.

AmeriCorps VISTA members recruit and manage community volunteers, raise funds, and help coordinate projects. They support programs that improve academic performance, expand job opportunities, develop financial assets, alleviate hunger, reduce homelessness, and improve health services. They also support programs that increase housing access, develop economic opportunities for low-income veterans and military families, and expand access to technology.

AmeriCorps VISTA

- Engages more than **8,000** members annually
- Members serve at over **3,000** locations across the country
- Leverages **$178 million** in cash and in-kind resources each year
- Mobilizes **900,000** volunteers annually
- More than **220,000** individuals have served since 1965

NationalService.gov/AmeriCorpsVISTA

February 2017

Core Principles of AmeriCorps VISTA

Anti-Poverty Focus

AmeriCorps VISTA supports community efforts to overcome poverty. Any nonprofit organization, educational institution, or tribal or government agency with a project explicitly designed to alleviate poverty may sponsor an AmeriCorps VISTA member.

Community Empowerment

AmeriCorps VISTA values the inherent strengths and resources of the community. AmeriCorps VISTA expects project sponsors to involve residents of the community in planning, developing, and implementing the project. This approach allows low-income individuals the freedom to speak for themselves in determining the projects that best suit their specific needs.

Capacity Building

AmeriCorps VISTA expands the ability of sponsor organizations to alleviate poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA members strengthen and support organizations by building infrastructure, expanding community partnerships, securing long-term resources, coordinating training for participants, and much more. These capacity-building activities enable organizations to provide better services to low-income individuals and communities.

Sustainable Solutions

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as a short-term resource to help sponsor organizations achieve lasting solutions to poverty.

Join AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA members work on impactful projects that lift people out of poverty while receiving comprehensive training and support, including a living allowance, skills-building, federal noncompetitive hiring eligibility, health benefit, and the Eli Segal Education Award or a cash stipend.

Sponsor a VISTA

Any nonprofit organization or public agency involved in alleviating poverty may partner with AmeriCorps VISTA to develop a project and host AmeriCorps VISTA members. Potential sponsors must have the capacity and commitment to recruit, train, supervise, and support AmeriCorps VISTA members.

National Service

AmeriCorps VISTA is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women ages 18-24. AmeriCorps NCCC members are assigned to one of five regional campuses into teams of approximately ten members and complete 2-3 month projects responding to local communities' needs throughout the United States. To achieve our mission of strengthening communities and developing leaders through service, members assist community and faith-based based organizations, national nonprofits, schools, local municipalities, national and state parks, and Indian tribes.

In 2012, AmeriCorps NCCC collaborated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and created a new unit called FEMA Corps. FEMA Corps promotes an ethic of national service, strengthens the federal government's disaster capabilities, and expands educational and economic opportunities for young people. FEMA Corps training and experience prepares members for careers in emergency management and related fields. Members learn about community organizing, public speaking, customer service, and office management skills, all while positively impacting the lives of disaster survivors.

Since 2000, AmeriCorps NCCC teams have:

- Assisted **17.6 million people** in disaster areas
- Recruited or coordinated nearly **840,000 volunteers**
- Assisted more than **70,000 veterans**
- Served **7.7 million meals**
- Protected more than **1.3 million acres** of land through firefighting and fire management

NationalService.gov/NCCC

February 2017

Last year*, AmeriCorps NCCC members:

- Returned **$16.5 million** to communities through tax returns
- Supported or tutored **35,000 K-12 students**
- Restored or protected more than **4,000 acres** of wildlife habitats
- Weatherized or outfitted nearly **300 homes** with energy efficient modifications
- Assisted nearly **19,000 individuals** experiencing homelessness

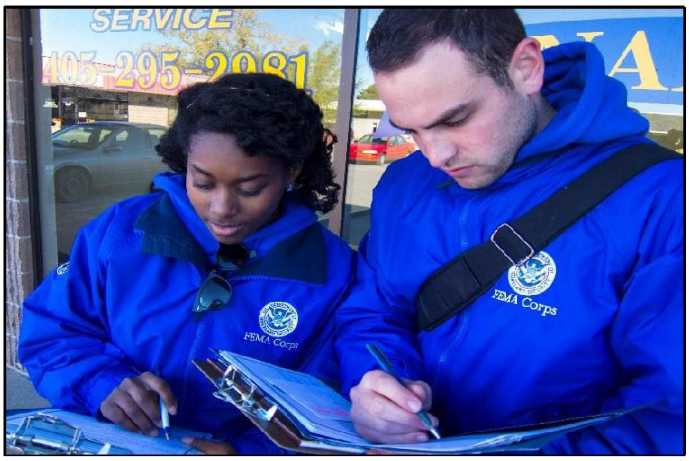
** AmeriCorps NCCC projects ending between October 1, 2014, and September 30, 2015*

AmeriCorps NCCC's flexible program structure has created the opportunity to partner with non-profit or government organizations that might lack the capacity to manage longer grant programs, as well as the ability to create strategic collaborations with other national service programs and federal agencies to magnify the impact on communities served.

AmeriCorps NCCC projects span five issue areas:

- **Natural and Other Disasters**
- **Infrastructure Improvement**
- **Environmental Stewardship**
- **Energy Conservation**
- **Urban and Rural Development**

FEMA Corps members focus on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities, providing support in areas ranging from **working directly with disaster survivors to supporting disaster recovering centers to sharing valuable disaster preparedness and mitigation information with the public.**



Corporation for National and Community Service

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps
80,000 members
20,000 sites

Senior Corps
244,000 members
35,000 sites

Social Innovation Fund
$93 million annual match
426 organizations in 44 states

Cost-Effective Solutions for Our Communities and Nation

We are the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency and the nation's largest grant-maker in support of service and volunteering. We manage AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund.

Working hand in hand with local partners, we tap the ingenuity and can-do spirit of the American people to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing our nation. Our service participants and the community volunteers they coordinate enable tens of thousands of non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and municipal agencies to solve tough problems and meet local needs. We serve, we build, and we make an impact that changes lives and communities.

Our Focus Areas

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

National Service By the Numbers

CNCS **improves lives**, **strengthens communities**, and **fosters civic engagement** through service and volunteering.

- **324,000** Senior Corps and AmeriCorps members
- **3 million** leveraged volunteers
- **55,000** service locations
- **$1.26 billion** leveraged

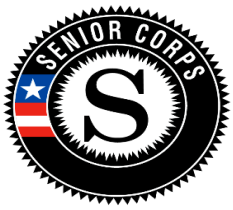
NationalService.gov

January 2017

ECO AmeriCorps

Getting Things Done for America

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for 80,000 Americans each year to give intensive service to their communities and country. AmeriCorps members tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, assist veterans and military families, provide health services, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, and build the capacity of nonprofit organizations. In exchange for a year of full-time service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that can be used to pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified loans. Since 1994, more than 1 million Americans have given 1.3 billion hours of service through AmeriCorps.



Making a Difference for Generations

Each year, Senior Corps taps the skills, talents, and experience of more than 244,000 Americans age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: the Foster Grandparent Program, RSVP, and the Senior Companion Program. RSVP volunteers help local police departments conduct safety patrols, participate in environmental projects, provide intensive educational services to children and adults, and respond to natural disasters. Foster Grandparents serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to young people with special needs. Senior Companions help homebound seniors maintain independence in their own homes.

Finding What Works, Making It Work for More People

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) represents a new approach by the federal government to address urgent national challenges. The SIF mobilizes public and private resources to grow the impact of promising, innovative, community-based solutions that have evidence of compelling results. The program focuses on three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. With its unique public-private partnership structure, the SIF annually leverages more than $93 million in matching funds through a network of more than 426 grantees in 44 states and the District of Columbia. The Social Innovation Fund reaches more than 700,000 individuals and will continue to impact tens of thousands more.

Other Programs and Initiatives

- The **Volunteer Generation Fund** strengthens the nation's civic infrastructure by helping nonprofits recruit, manage, and support more volunteers.
- The **September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance** offers Americans the opportunity to honor victims, survivors, and those who rose up in service on September 11, 2001, through charitable service.
- The **Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service** supports community organizations in their efforts to engage local citizens in service on the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday.
- The **President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll** honors colleges and universities for the commitment of their students, faculty, and staff to community service.
- The **National Service Knowledge Network** provides training and resources to national service programs and nonprofits seeking to expand their capacity and impact.
- The CNCS annual **Volunteering and Civic Life in America** report provides comprehensive data to state and local leaders to help them expand the impact of service.

DISASTER SERVICES | ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY | EDUCATION | ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP | HEALTHY FUTURES | VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Service in Vermont

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS IN VERMONT

More than 2,300 people of all ages and backgrounds are helping to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through national service in Vermont. Serving at more than 530 locations throughout the state, these citizens tutor and mentor children, support veterans and military families, provide health services, restore the environment, respond to disasters, increase economic opportunity, and recruit and manage volunteers.

This year, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will commit more than $6,200,000 to support Vermont communities through national service and social innovation initiatives. CNCS invests in cost-effective community solutions--working hand in hand with local partners to improve lives, expand economic opportunity, and engage citizens in solving problems in their communities. Serving in many of the state's most impoverished communities, CNCS provides vital support to schools, food banks, homeless shelters, community health clinics, youth centers, veterans service facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations at a time of growing demand for services. Through a unique public-private partnership, this federal investment will leverage an additional $5,520,000 in other resources to strengthen community impact, build local support, and increase return on taxpayer dollars. Nationwide, CNCS, its grantees, and project sponsors generated more than $1.25 billion in outside resources from businesses, foundations, public agencies, and other sources in FY 2015.

AmeriCorps: This year AmeriCorps will provide more than 340 individuals the opportunity to provide intensive, results-driven service to meet education, environmental, health, economic, and other pressing needs in communities across Vermont. Most AmeriCorps grant funding goes to the SerVermont, which in turn awards grants to nonprofit groups to respond to local needs. Most of the remainder of the grant funding is distributed by CNCS directly to multi-state and national organizations through a competitive grants process. Other individuals serve through AmeriCorps VISTA, whose members help bring individuals and communities out of poverty by serving full-time to fight hunger and illiteracy, improve health services, and increase housing opportunities, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), a 10-month, full time residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members earn an education award that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994, more than 5,100 Vermont residents have served more than 7.6 million hours and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than $17,860,000.

Senior Corps: More than 1,900 seniors in Vermont contribute their time and talents in one of three Senior Corps programs. Foster Grandparents serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to more than 750 young people who have special needs. Senior Companions help more than 370 homebound seniors and other adults maintain independence in their own homes. RSVP volunteers conduct safety patrols, renovate homes, protect the environment, tutor and mentor youth, respond to natural disasters, and provide other services through more than 340 groups across Vermont.

Social Innovation Fund: The Social Innovation Fund transforms lives and communities using limited federal investment as a catalyst to grow the impact of nonprofits with evidence of strong results. It harnesses the expertise of grantmaking intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits and engages funding partners to contribute nearly three dollars to every one federal dollar invested. As the Social Innovation Fund network grows programs that work in Vermont, more people are able to overcome their most pressing challenges in the areas of economic opportunity, health, and youth development. The Social Innovation Fund is investing more than $56,000 in expanding the impact of 1 nonprofit in Vermont.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. CNCS engages millions of Americans in service to meet local needs through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and national days of service; improves communities through the Social Innovation Fund, and leads volunteer initiatives across the nation. To learn more visit NationalService.gov or Serve.gov or call 202-606-5000 or TTY 1-800-833-3722.

Information on this page reflects active programs as of February 10, 2017

Key Differences among the AmeriCorps Programs

Category	AmeriCorps VISTA Projects	AmeriCorps State Programs	AmeriCorps National Programs
Member term of service	Full-time only: 365 days	Full-time, Half-time, Reduced Half-time, Quarter-Time, Minimum-Time	Full-time, Half-time, Reduced Half-time, Quarter-Time, Minimum-Time
Member stipend/ living allowance payments	Administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (unless VISTA project has a Program Grant)	Administered by the Grantee	Administered by the Grantee
Member support costs (stipend and benefits)	Covered by the Corporation (unless the VISTA project is a Cost-share)	Required for full-time members and optional for others. Programs can us Corporation grant funds or match funding to cover member support costs.	Required for full-time members and optional for others. Programs can us Corporation grant funds or match funding to cover member support costs.
Member Training	Corporation provides a Pre-service Orientation to all new VISTA members	Grantee is responsible for training members	Grantee is responsible for training members
Member Service	Capacity Building activities, incidental direct service only	Direct service and capacity building activities	Direct service and capacity building activities
Member Fundraising	No limit on % of time spent raising funds for the organization	Cannot allot more than 10% of their time to fundraising for the AmeriCorps program	Cannot allot more than 10% of their time to fundraising for the AmeriCorps program
Segal AmeriCorps Education award and end of term options	Members choose a Segal AmeriCorps education award OR a cash stipend, paid upon successful completion of service.	Members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education award appropriate for the term of service completed. There is NO choice of a cash option.	Members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education award appropriate for the term of service completed. There is NO choice of a cash option.
Operational support costs	Projects contribute 100% of the operating costs in cash or in-kind	New programs must contribute a minimum of 24% of the total program costs in cash or in-kind. Overall grantee share of total budget increases gradually to 50% overall share by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter. There is no minimum match required for EAP and Fixed-Amount grants.	New programs must contribute a minimum of 24% of the total program costs in cash or in-kind. Overall grantee share of total budget increases gradually to 50% overall share by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter. There is no minimum match required for EAP and Fixed-Amount grants.
Corporation grant support	Training and support money may be available	Funding amount based on Member Service Years (MSY) and varies based on type of program.	Funding amount based on Member Service Years (MSY) and varies based on type of program.

Reporting Requirements	Program reports required quarterly in first year, often reduced to semi-annual thereafter; financial reports required only for programs receiving grants	Set by the State Commission	Programs submit annual progress reports due the first Monday in December and semi-annual Financial Status reports directly to the Corporation
Application Submission process	Begins with a Concept Paper submitted to the Corporation State Office.	Begins with Commission issuing a Request for Proposals and applicants applying directly to the State Commission	Begins with submission of an application directly to the Corporation
Results Requirements	Member service must lift people out of poverty and be sustainable; program must address one or more CNCS strategic initiatives	Determined by State and CNCS priorities as well as program identified performance measures	Determined by CNCS priorities as well as program identified performance measures
Application Deadline	No set deadline; contact your CNCS State Office	One annual deadline for each grant competition. Check with State Commissions for specific deadlines.	Specific annual deadline for Planning Grant applicants and a separate annual deadline for all other grant competitions.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIONAL SERVICE

When faced with challenges, our nation has always relied on the dedication and action of its citizens. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) carries on a long tradition of citizen involvement by providing opportunities for Americans of all ages to improve their communities through service.

CCC Camp Elmore, Vermont

CCC Camp Elmore, Vermont-
Team leaders of Company 1209

CCC Camp Elmore, Vermont-
Survey Truck

The Civilian Conservation Corps

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps. Four million young people joined in response to his call to service, restoring the nation's parks, revitalizing the economy, and supporting their families and themselves. For 11 years the Civilian Conservation Corps provided billions of dollars in services and enabled millions of families to live in dignity.

CCC Camp Elmore, Vermont

The GI Bill

During the 1940's, the GI Bill linked wartime service to educational benefits, offering returning World War II veterans the opportunity to pursue higher education in partial compensation for service to their country. Veterans improved their own lives by attending college. They also contributed mightily to America's future.

Peace Corps volunteer serving in Kenya 2006

Peace Corps
In the 1960s the call to service came from President John F. Kennedy, who challenged Americans in his inaugural address, **"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."**
In response to this challenge, the Peace Corps was born. The Peace Corps continues to engage thousands of volunteers who travel the world far and wide.

National and Community Service Trust Act
President Bill Clinton sponsored the National and Community Service Trust Act, a revision of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which was passed by a bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress and signed into law on September 21, 1993. The legislation created a new federal agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), to administer federally-funded national service programs known as AmeriCorps.

President Bill Clinton, 1993

Put America Together campaign poster

The War on Poverty
President Lyndon B. Johnson brought the spirit of the Peace Corps home to America by creating Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) in 1964. VISTA, which is now part of AmeriCorps, continues to fund programs under the sponsorship of local public agencies or nonprofit organizations to improve the condition of people living in under-served, low-income communities throughout America.

Why is AmeriCorps Unique?

Key Differences between AmeriCorps Members and Employees

To fully understand your placement at your host site, it's essential to understand the differences between an AmeriCorps Member and a regular employee. These differences provide a framework to help you understand how you fit in and how to talk about your role with other staff members.

Motivation for applying

Members are motivated by a desire to serve the community and 'get things done'. AmeriCorps Members receive little in the way of monetary compensation, and instead are driven by the satisfaction of their service. This makes it very important to have quality work and opportunities lined up at the site, and for the member to take advantage of service, networking, and other experiential opportunities.

Regional and national implications

AmeriCorps is nationwide program that engages more than 80,000 members each year. As part of this program, members are subject to a special set of rules and regulations. *See page 20 for an overview of these rules and regulations. In addition, members may be called away from the site for events that relate to AmeriCorps, such as providing relief services in the case of a disaster.

Compensation

Members do not receive a wage or salary. Instead, they receive a minimal living allowance, frequently set at/near the poverty level and subject to state and federal tax. Members also receive an education award at the completion of their service (also subject to tax). They may opt to enroll in the AmeriCorps health insurance whereby the monthly premium is covered. Additionally, members gain valuable skills, training and networking opportunities through their service.

Responsibilities

Members are guided by a position description developed before the position begins. AmeriCorps positions should fill a unique niche at the organization and should not displace or duplicate other employed positions. Members also have many responsibilities to the AmeriCorps program. These responsibilities may include attending trainings, completing reports, engaging in other service projects, service learning activities, etc.

Potential need for greater support & coaching

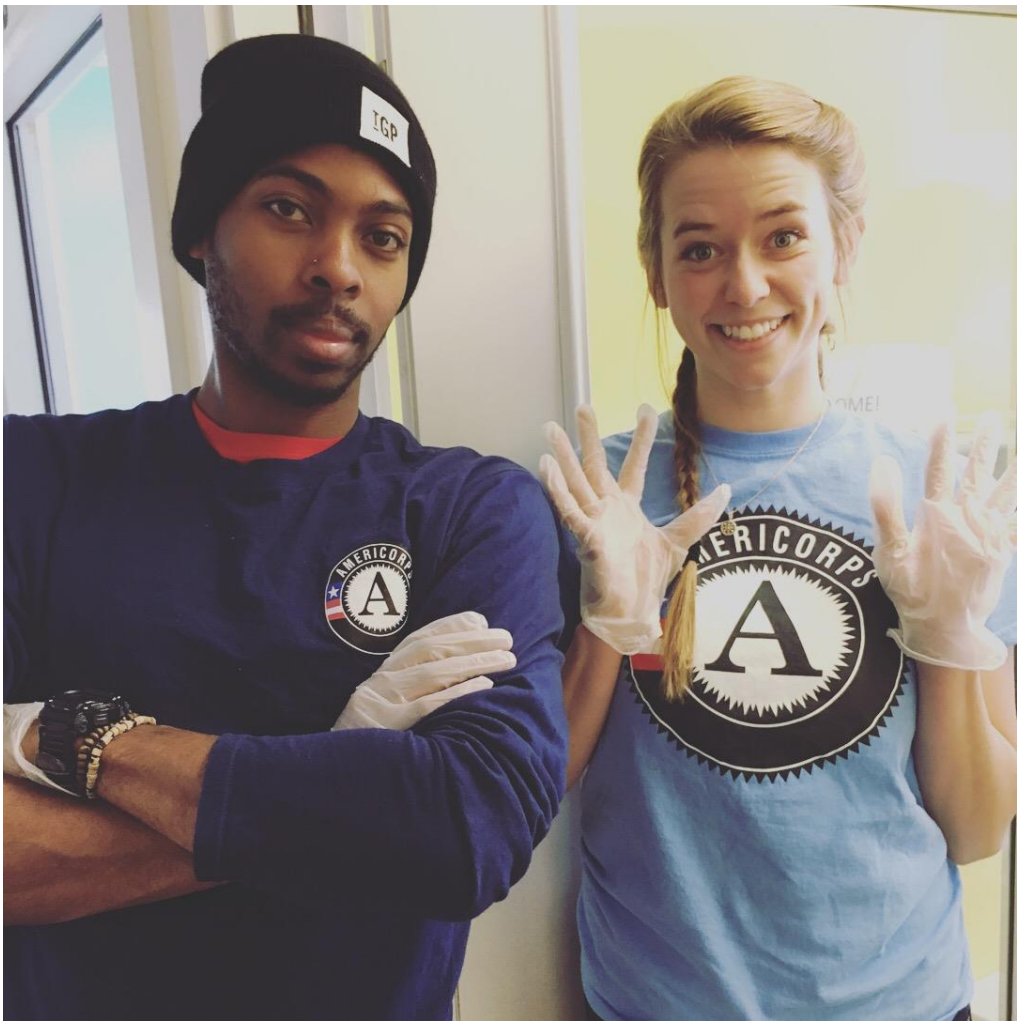
AmeriCorps Members may have little experience in a workplace setting when beginning service. In addition to technical training, Host Site Supervisors and Program Staff are trained to assist members with general and basic job skills as necessary.

Tenure in position

Members are placed at sites on a temporary contracted basis, most commonly 11 months. Full-Time members are contracted to complete 1,700 hours. Members may sign on for a second term of service but are not allowed to serve more than 4 terms of service, and may not receive more than two full education awards. The member should be thinking of "what's next?" during their service. The Program and Host Sites support the member in using their service experience as a springboard for "life after AmeriCorps."

Orientation

Members attend an AmeriCorps Orientation at the start of their service.



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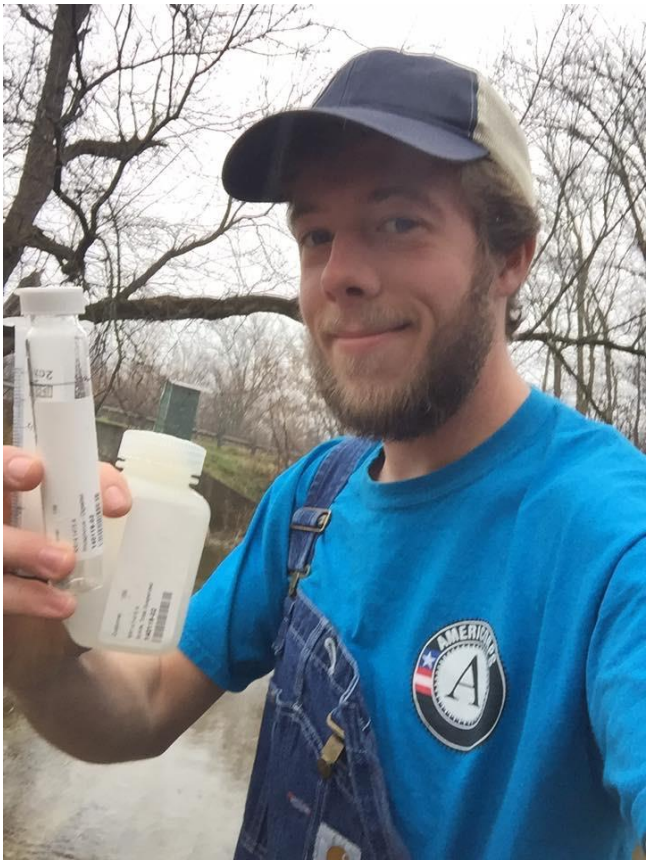


Prohibited AmeriCorps Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

a. Attempting to influence legislation;
b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
h. Providing a direct benefit to—
    i. A business organized for profit;
    ii. A labor union;
    iii. A partisan political organization;
    iv. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these 9 provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
    v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 3.g. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
k. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

In addition to the Prohibited Activities listed above, as an AmeriCorps State* program, members are disallowed from:

- General fundraising for the host site or AmeriCorps, including funds that would be used for overhead costs, wages, general operation, or the Host Site's cost share for the member.
- Conducting Administrative tasks that are not directly related to the members Direct Service.

What about the Vermont Marijuana Law (Act 86)?

From Guide to Vermont's Laws on Marijuana in the Workplace (June 2018) Vermont Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Unit

If Act 86 is a Vermont law, is marijuana is still illegal under federal law?

Yes. Act 86 only removes the possibility that individuals in Vermont would be prosecuted under state law for certain, minor recreational marijuana cultivation and use. It does not remove the possibility someone might nonetheless be prosecuted under federal law. Historically, federal authorities have not treated possession of small amounts of marijuana as an enforcement priority. That history, however, is no guarantee that federal priorities won't change in the future. The federal Controlled Substances Act ("CSA") places marijuana into the same category (known as "Schedule I") as other more serious drugs, such as heroin and LSD, for which there is no permitted legal use.12 {The CSA also categorizes marijuana as a more serious drug than cocaine, oxycodone or fentanyl, which have a lower, Schedule II classification). Although there have long been questions about treating marijuana as a Schedule I prohibited substance, Congress has not changed the law, even in the face of state laws that have moved away from criminalizing medical or recreational marijuana use.

Prohibited AmeriCorps FAQs

Our program's annual report shows the value of national and community service and is designed, in part, to persuade our community to support our program and other programs supported by CNCS. Is this permitted?

The restrictions on legislative lobbying do not apply to efforts like this to educate the general public, provided that the materials are not specifically designed to generate lobbying activities.

What if I provide a factual, technical presentation to a legislator who is visiting our program and at the end the legislator makes an unexpected announcement that he or she has decided to co-sponsor legislation to support national service?

There is nothing wrong with hosting an informational site visit by an elected official. If your presentation is informational and focuses on a topic directly related to your organization's performance under a grant program, the fact that a legislator reaches and announces this conclusion spontaneously does not in itself make the presentation unallowable.

May a local program supervisor visit elected officials in Washington, D.C.?

The threshold question is whether the costs of such a trip would be a reasonable and necessary program expense given your approved budget and the specific purposes of your grant award. In addition, assuming this first criterion is met, the OMB Cost Principles for nonprofits and institutions of higher education have an additional requirement: travel, lodging, and meal costs may be allowed only if they are incurred to offer testimony at a regularly scheduled Congressional hearing pursuant to a written request for such presentation made by the hearing's convener. Because such costs are allowable under very limited circumstances, you should seek guidance from your program officer at CNCS ahead of time.

An elected official who is running for re-election wants to have a campaign publicity event at our service site. Is this type of site visit permitted?

No, you should steer clear of any event that could appear to be partisan in nature.

I work for a national non-profit organization that receives a grant to operate an AmeriCorps program. My position is partially funded under the AmeriCorps grant and partially funded by non-federal sources. Can I lobby on issues related to AmeriCorps when I am not on AmeriCorps time?

The restrictions apply only to the use of Federal grant funds (including matching funds) and to projects and programs supported by CNCS. You should be careful to document that any lobbying is done during the time that is not charged to your CNCS grant and that your lobbying activities are not part of the AmeriCorps program.

Doesn't the Domestic Volunteer Service Act give programs specific statutory authority to lobby concerning appropriations or authorization legislation?

You are right about the authority in the DVSA, but DVSA programs are currently subject to a superseding proviso in their annual appropriations statute that prohibits the use of appropriated funds to engage in any activity that is designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the Congress or any State legislature.

May a CNCS-funded program sponsor or endorse an event, such as a debate between candidates, which itself is not partisan, but which likely will include advocacy for or against political parties, platforms, candidates, proposed legislation or elected officials?

CNCS-funded programs should avoid any connection with such political events, and individuals enrolled in a national service program who attend such events should avoid any appearance that they are doing so as part of the national service program.

Does that mean an organization receiving CNCS funds may not take part in the political process?

No, but an organization that receives CNCS funds may only sponsor or endorse political events if it does so without using CNCS support, and if it avoids the appearance that it is doing so in its capacity as a CNCS grantee or that the event has any connection to the CNCS-funded project.

AmeriCorps Jargon

1. **You are a member** of the Vermont ECO AmeriCorps Program. Volunteers give freely of their time by claiming with no remuneration for the work they do. We do not want to misrepresent your role, and we want to recognize you by acknowledging that you have committed to a year of national and community service by identifying as **members** of a movement. This term best represents you, your role, and your commitment to service.

Volunteers give their time with no financial reward. (School board members, land trust board members, church members, scouts, students, people participating in a project on their personal time.) We serve with volunteers, and often help to recruit and perhaps train volunteers to help mostly volunteer powered organizations/non-profits who depend on community and professional people to operate services. AmeriCorps **members** receive a living allowance and an educational award for their service.

2. As a member, you were **selected** for service. You were **not hired** for a job. You receive a **living allowance** and **not a wage**. You are a **member. You are not a volunteer, intern, or an employee**. You were selected to participate in a service opportunity to fulfill a commitment of service for your community, **not to do a job**.

3. You **serve** at a **host site** or **service site,** and your supervisor is often referred to as the **site supervisor**. Groups, organizations, schools, etc. whom we join with to carry out project plans are referred to as **community partners**.

4. **Projects** are the collaborations we develop with community groups, and/or organizations based on their interest and needs. Projects have goals and **objectives**, develop from a **plan**, have resources and **needs identified**, **can be measured for success and impact,** and can be continued without our assistance. Our goal is that communities are so empowered, they don't need us anyway. If communities can continue these projects on their own after we leave, then the project is truly **sustainable**.

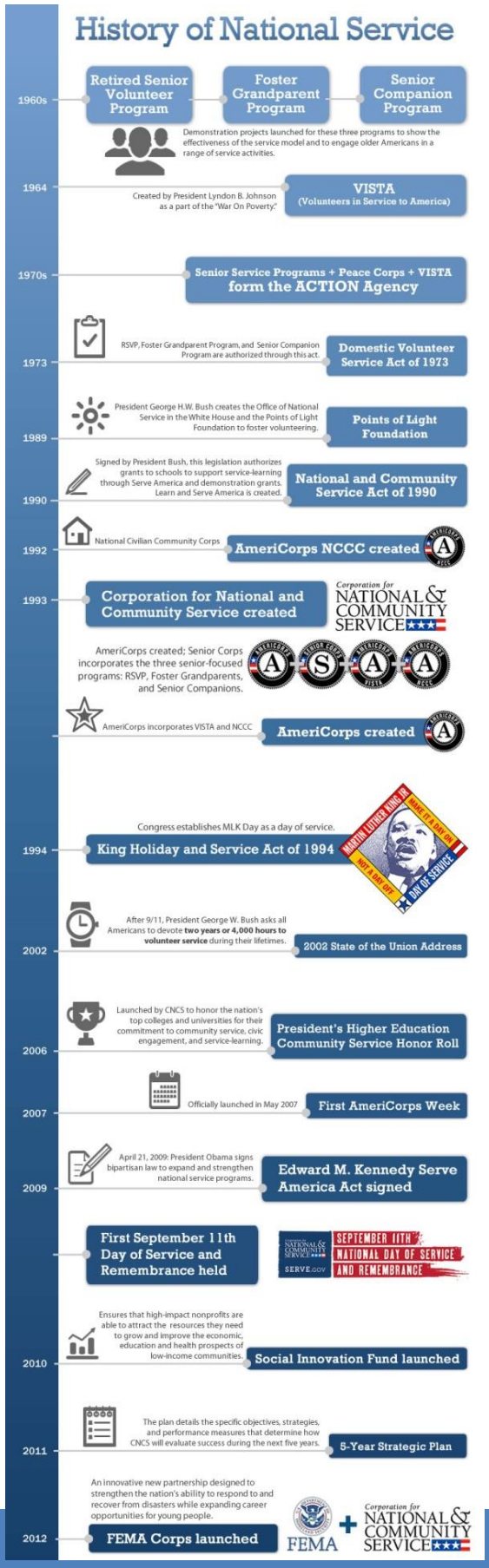
5. You don't do projects **for** communities, but rather you join **with** communities to carry out projects. This is more than a semantic difference, since our intent is to leave communities more empowered than they were to help themselves. We want to respond to their needs and ideas, not just act on our own and hope they fit in the community later. **Empowerment** is helping people help themselves. We always look for opportunities in our projects to involve those people who benefit from the project, as partners, collaborators and/or consultants in the project activity itself.

6. You should refrain from using the words **advocate** and **solicit** when you are describing your service. Although your service may involve advocacy or solicitation of resources for a project, the Corporation for National & Community Service is sensitive about the use of these words because of their misuse and

misinterpretation in the past. It's preferred that you say, "I do service to **support** the community", or "I **obtained** donated materials for this project from Business X," etc.

7. As an AmeriCorps member you complete **direct service** with your service site. This enables them to go farther/be better than they could have without your service.

Thanks for your cooperation with this! Your words matter to us....


History of National Service
1960s
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Foster Grandparent Program
Senior Companion Program
Demonstration projects launched for these three programs to show the effectiveness of the service model and to engage older Americans in a range of service activities.
1964
Created by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a part of the "War On Poverty."
VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
1970s
Senior Service Programs + Peace Corps + VISTA form the ACTION Agency
1973
RSVP, Foster Grandparent Program, and Senior Companion Program are authorized through this act.
Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973
1989
President George H.W. Bush creates the Office of National Service in the White House and the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering.
Points of Light Foundation
1990
Signed by President Bush, this legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning through Serve America and demonstration grants. Learn and Serve America is created.
National and Community Service Act of 1990
1992
National Civilian Community Corps
AmeriCorps NCCC created
1993
Corporation for National and Community Service created
Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE
AmeriCorps created; Senior Corps incorporates the three senior-focused programs: RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions.
AmeriCorps incorporates VISTA and NCCC
AmeriCorps created
1994
Congress establishes MLK Day as a day of service.
King Holiday and Service Act of 1994
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MAKE IT A DAY ON NOT A DAY OFF DAY OF SERVICE
2002
After 9/11, President George W. Bush asks all Americans to devote two years or 4,000 hours to volunteer service during their lifetimes.
2002 State of the Union Address
2006
Launched by CNCS to honor the nation's top colleges and universities for their commitment to community service, civic engagement, and service-learning.
President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll
2007
Officially launched in May 2007
First AmeriCorps Week
2009
April 21, 2009: President Obama signs bipartisan law to expand and strengthen national service programs.
Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act signed
First September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance held
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE SERVE.GOV
SEPTEMBER 11TH NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE
2010
Ensures that high-impact nonprofits are able to attract the resources they need to grow and improve the economic, education and health prospects of low-income communities.
Social Innovation Fund launched
2011
The plan details the specific objectives, strategies, and performance measures that determine how CNCS will evaluate success during the next five years.
5-Year Strategic Plan
2012
An innovative new partnership designed to strengthen the nation's ability to respond to and recover from disasters while expanding career opportunities for young people.
FEMA Corps launched
FEMA
Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps FAQs

Is AmeriCorps like the Peace Corps?

Yes. AmeriCorps is often referred to as "the domestic Peace Corps." Both agencies are committed to service, and both offer challenging and rewarding full-time opportunities. Peace Corps assignments are all overseas, and AmeriCorps members serve only in the US. While Peace Corps Volunteers serve for two years, a stint in AmeriCorps usually lasts 10 months to one year. (Some AmeriCorps projects also offer part-time opportunities, and some AmeriCorps members serve more than one term of service.)

What skills do members need to have?

Some programs have specific skill requests in certain areas, and others look for a bachelor's degree or a few years of related volunteer/job experience. For others, motivation and commitment to service may be the primary requirement.

Do members get paid?

For all AmeriCorps programs, members receive a modest living allowance, and some programs provide housing. Members may not save much money during your year of service, but most members find the living allowance to be adequate to cover their needs. AmeriCorps members who complete a term of service also receive an AmeriCorps Education Award.

Is there an age requirement?

Members must be at least 17 years old, although some service opportunities require them to be at least 18. For one of our programs, the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), members must be between 18 and 24 years old, but for most there are no upper age limits

Can someone join who is not a U.S. citizen?

A person must be a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S. in order to serve as an AmeriCorps member.

Are there any available loan forgiveness programs or repayment plans that are available to AmeriCorps members?

On September 27, 2007, President Bush signed the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (“CCRAA”) into law. In addition to other amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, the CCRAA created two new federal programs: a new Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and a new Income-Based Repayment plan (IBR) for the repayment of federal loans. The new Income-Based Repayment plan helps to make repaying education loans more affordable for low-income borrowers, such as an AmeriCorps member living on a stipend; AmeriCorps service is also recognized as equivalent to a public service job for the purposes of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

Can I defer my student loans during my service with AmeriCorps?

Members may qualify for postponement, or forbearance, of the repayment of existing loans during service. The education award can help members pay off qualified student loans once they complete their service. Lender should be contacted for specific information or to confirm loan status during AmeriCorps service.

What if I am out of school and not interested in the education award?

AmeriCorps VISTA members may opt for a cash payment of $100 per month of service instead of the education award. All other AmeriCorps members are eligible only for the education award.

I'm confused. There are different programs, with different names, but they're all AmeriCorps?

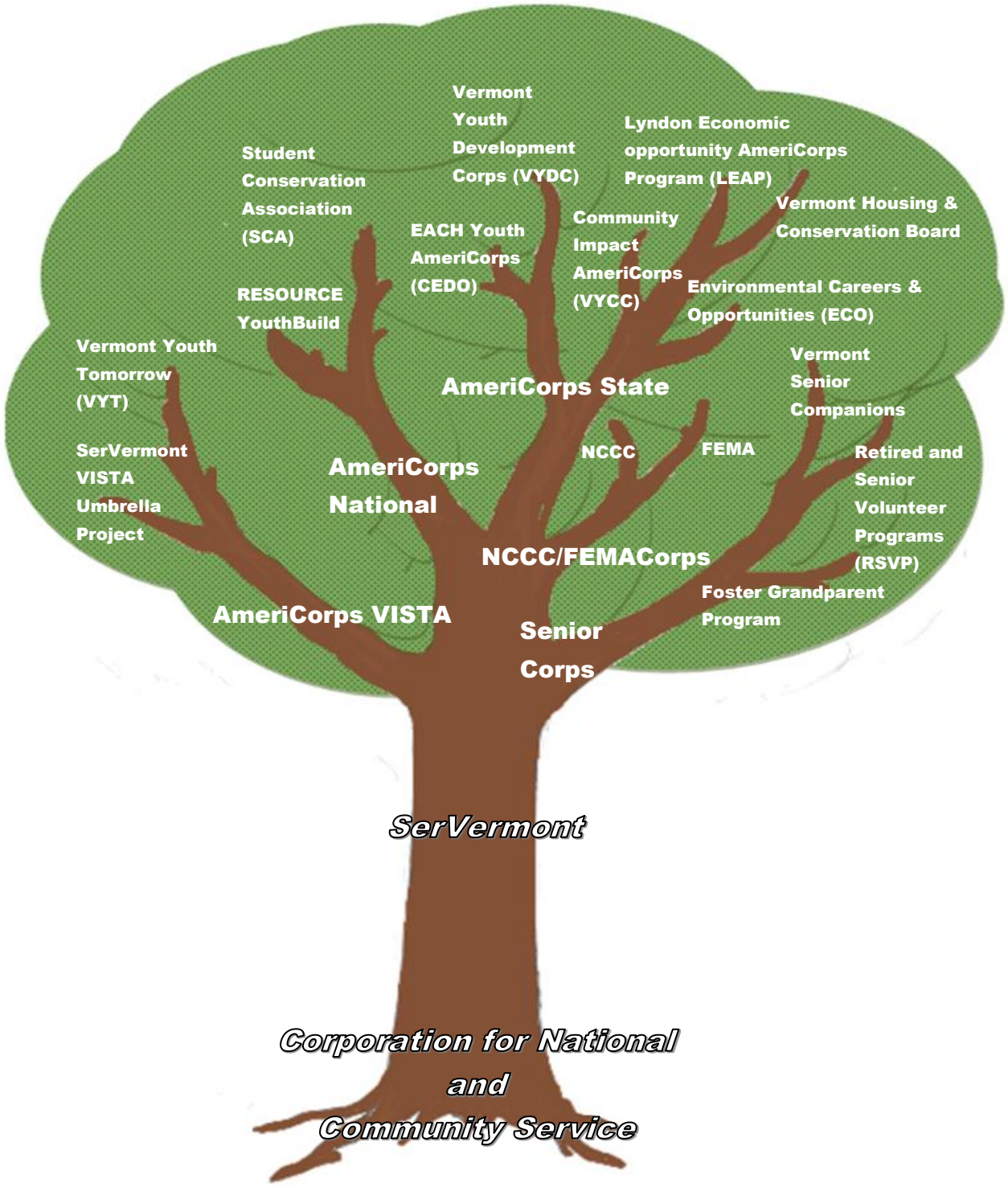
Yes, basically. AmeriCorps is a national network of hundreds of programs throughout the United States. Two of these programs -- AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC -- are managed nationally. The others fall under the umbrella of our AmeriCorps State and National programs, which are administered by State Service Commissions in each state and U.S. territory. Depending upon your interests and availability, we can help you determine which program might be best for you.

If I am currently participating in AmeriCorps and have a question about the Education Award. Who should I contact?

For general questions about the Education Award and student loan deferment, contact National Service Trust at 1-800-942-2677. Members who have successfully completed AmeriCorps service, can view their AmeriCorps Education Award account balance and activity online. To request a copy of an AmeriCorps Education Award voucher or report a change of address, visit https://questions.nationalservice.gov/.

For general information on student financial assistance, members should contact their high school guidance counselor, the financial aid officer at the post-secondary institution they plan to attend, the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243), or consult the Student Guide issued by the U.S.

ECO AmeriCorps



Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

The Eli Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, named after Eli Segal -- one of the pioneers of the national service movement and the first CEO of CNCS -- are a post-service benefit received by AmeriCorps members, including those supported through AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC.
Upon successful completion of a term of service, members are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which may be used only to pay college costs or to repay student loans. Members may earn up to two awards and have seven years to use this benefit. Since the inception of AmeriCorps in 1994, more than one million alumni have earned more than $3.3 billion in education awards.
The award, which was designed to encourage AmeriCorps alumni to seek postsecondary education opportunities, serves as a powerful recruitment tool for individuals to join AmeriCorps. Studies show that AmeriCorps alumni, with their commitment to service, also make excellent students. A growing number of higher education institutions, in order to encourage AmeriCorps alumni to enroll in their institutions, are "matching" the education award with scholarships and / or academic credits.

Amount, Eligibility, and Limitations

Beginning with terms of service that were supported with 2010 funds, the amount of a full-time education award is equivalent to the maximum value of the Pell Grant for the award year in which the term of service is funded. Prior to this time, the amount of an education award had remained the same since the AmeriCorps program began. Because AmeriCorps State and National programs are funded on a different schedule than VISTA and NCCC, VISTA and NCCC members will be eligible for the new amount sooner than AmeriCorps State and National members. As a reference, the amount of a Pell grant for the 2017 fiscal year is $5,815. Members should check with their program or project sponsor to confirm the amount of the award for which they are eligible.
Because the maximum amount of the Pell Grant can change every year, the amount of a full-time award can change in the future. However, once a member earns an award, the dollar value of that award will not increase. For all programs, award amounts for part-time terms of service vary based upon the length of the required term of service. Payments made from Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards are considered taxable income in the year that the Corporation makes the payment to the school or loan holder. A member serving in a full-time term of service is required to complete the service within 12 months.

Eligibility

You are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award if you successfully complete your term of service in accordance with your member contract with one of the following approved AmeriCorps programs:

- AmeriCorps State and National
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- AmeriCorps NCCC
- Alternative to the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

As an alternative to the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, AmeriCorps VISTA members may choose to take a post-service cash stipend.

Only AmeriCorps VISTA alumni who choose the stipend and have student loans may be eligible for up to 15% cancellation on certain types of loans. To determine what student loans may be eligible for cancellation and to receive forms, contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-433-3243. AmeriCorps VISTA members who choose the education award may not claim a partial cancellation.

Award Limitations

Currently, the maximum numbers of terms that you can serve in each AmeriCorps program are:

- four for AmeriCorps State and National
- five for VISTAs
- two for NCCC

Full-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter time, and minimum time terms of service each count as one term of service.

Generally, if you are released for cause before completing your term of service and do not receive an education award, that term of service counts as one of your terms. The Trust does not make payments to anyone other than qualified schools and loan holders. See your financial aid counselor for information on how they handle disbursements and reimbursements.

If you withdraw from the school at which you have used the education award, the school may be required to refund the Trust. If any refund is owed, it is credited to your education award "account," and is subject to the award's original expiration date (seven years from the date the award was earned). For general information on how withdrawing from school may affect your student financial aid, ask your financial aid counselor or refer to the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Handbook.

Under certain circumstances, you can use the education award to study outside the U.S. Contact the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677 for further information.

You have seven years to use the education award from the date of your completion of service. You can divide up your award and use portions of it at different times, as long as it is for authorized expenditures within the specified time period. You could, for example, apply a portion of it to existing qualified student loans, and save the remainder to pay for authorized college costs a few years down the road.

Award Transfers

The Serve America Act allows for the transfer of AmeriCorps State and National and Silver Service education awards under certain conditions. Basically, the person who earned the award has to have been at least 55 years old when they began the term of service and the person to whom the award is transferred has to be the transferring individual's child, grandchild, or foster child.

To transfer an award, an individual must:

- have earned an education award in an AmeriCorps State and National or a Silver Scholar term of service;
- have been at least 55 years of age before beginning the term of service for which the award is attached;
- have begun this term of service on or after October 1, 2009;
- transfer the award before the original expiration date;
- designate all or a portion of the unused award for the transfer; and
- complete the on-line forms authorizing the transfer, which includes providing information and certifying eligibility to make the transfer.

Taxes

Remember, the IRS has determined that payments made from an education award are considered to be included in a member's taxable income in the year the payment is made to the school or loan holder.

Interest payments are also considered taxable. This increase in your income could affect your tax liability for that year. See the web page on tax implications for additional information.

Using Your Segal Education Award

After successfully completing your AmeriCorps term of service, you are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. You can use your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to repay qualified student loans and to pay certain education costs at qualified institutions of higher education and training programs. You may use your education award to both repay qualified student loans and to pay for current education expenses. You can access the entire award or part of it until the total amount has been used or the award expires. You can use your award within seven years of completing your term of service.

Under certain conditions, education awards can be transferred to specific family members. Basically, the person who earned the award must have been at least 55 years of age in an AmeriCorps State or National Program when he or she began the term of service and the recipient of the award has to be the transferring individual's child, stepchild, foster child, grandchild, or step-grandchild. Visit the Frequently Asked Questions page for more information on transferring awards.

Use the Education Award to Repay Qualified Student Loans

The national service legislation defines *qualified student loan* as a loan backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (except PLUS Loans to parents of students) or under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Health Service Act. You may also use your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to repay a student loan made to you by a state agency, including state institutions of higher education.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards cannot be used to repay any other type of loan, even if the loan was obtained for educational purposes. You can use your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to repay defaulted student loans as long as the loans meet the definition of *qualified student loan*.

Use the Education Award to Pay Current Educational Expenses at a Qualified School

Qualified schools are higher educational institutions that currently participate in the Department of Education's Title IV student aid programs (referred to as Title IV schools). This category includes most post-secondary colleges, universities, and technical schools.

The education award can also be used for programs of education, apprenticeship, or on the job training that have been approved for educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. For the purpose of the education award, these are referred to as G.I. Bill approved programs. See the paragraph on G.I. Bill approved programs below, for further explanation.

Educational expenses that can be paid include:

- The "Cost of Attendance" (COA) for a degree- or certificate-granting program of study at a Title IV school. The COA may include tuition, books and supplies, transportation, room and board, and other expenses. Each Title IV school's financial aid office determines their students' COA based upon standard U.S. Department of Education guidance.
- Educational expenses for non-degree courses, such as continuing education courses or workshops offered by Title IV schools. Educational expenses that can be paid normally include tuition & fees, books, and supplies, as determined by the school's administrative office.
- Courses or training programs authorized under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. These courses and programs have been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs for GI Bill

educational benefits. The educational institutions or training establishments that offer these courses and training programs will have a VA-approved Certifying Official who can determine eligible expenses.

If the G.I. Bill approved programs are offered by institutions that are Title IV schools, expenses can be determined by either the institution's Financial Aid Office or the VA-approved Certifying Official.

Current educational expenses are expenses that were incurred after you became an AmeriCorps member. Educational expenses that pre-date your AmeriCorps service are not considered "current". If you took out a qualified student loan to pay for the expenses before you entered AmeriCorps, you can use your education award to repay that loan. But you cannot use the award to repay an old debt to a school, such as for an outstanding tuition bill that you incurred before you entered AmeriCorps.

GI-Approved Programs

An education award can now be used at programs of education, apprenticeship, or on the job training that have been approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 9/11 GI Bill. If the GI Bill approved program is offered by a Title IV school, any AmeriCorps alumni can use their award to pay for current educational expenses.

However, if the GI Bill approved program is offered by an institution that is not also a Title IV school, then special rules apply. We use the term **GI-Only** for these programs. The rules for these GI-Only programs are based upon the date the education award was certified (approved) by an authorized program staff and whether the AmeriCorps alumnus is a veteran.

These are the rules governing GI-Only programs—GI bill approved programs that are offered by institutions which are not Title IV schools:

- A Segal AmeriCorps Education Award certified on December 23, 2011, and later, can be used if the member is a veteran.
- An education award certified between October 1, 2009, and December 22, 2011, can be used by both veterans and non-veterans.
- No education award that was certified prior to October 1, 2009, can be used for GI-Only programs, even if the member is a veteran.

How to request payments online from your *My AmeriCorps* Account

Accessing and managing your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award has never been easier. My AmeriCorps provides a one-stop shop for AmeriCorps members and alumni -- presenting a wealth of information and frequently requested forms and services. By registering to use the system, you can check your award balance, access important financial forms, request for a forbearance, and, most importantly, easily make payments to your educational or financial institution.

After you have completed your service and received notification of the availability of your award, you can begin to use your education award. Go into your account in My AmeriCorps. In your home page, under "My Education Award" click on the "Create Education Award Payment Request" link to bring up the screen to request the payment. Follow the instructions and complete the form. You will select the purpose of the payment (loan or current educational expenses), the amount of the payment, and identify the holder of your student loan. When you click on "submit", a notice will be sent electronically to your educational or loan institution. A record of your request will appear in your account home page.

The school or loan holder will complete their portion of the form and return it electronically to CNCS. They will fill in the amount for which you are eligible if the request is for current educational expenses or

they will provide the payoff amount and loan type if the request is for a student loan. The institution will certify the accuracy of the information and submit it to CNCS for payment.

When you request a payment, the *Available Balance* will be adjusted by the amount of the request. Once the payment is disbursed, the *Award Balance* will be adjusted by the amount disbursed. All payment requests that are not acted upon will be cancelled after 90 days and your *Available Balance* and *Award Balance* will be adjusted accordingly.

If for some reason the institution denies the request for payment, they should have entered comments explaining the reason for the denial.

If your school or loan company has not registered in My AmeriCorps, they will not be on the list of institutions in the system. After you do a search and your institution does not appear on the list, click on the "Not Found" link. The next screen will ask you to enter as much information as you know about the school or loan company. You will need to enter information in each of the asterisked fields and then submit the form. These requests may be processed manually and can take several weeks to complete.

Matching Institutions

Colleges and universities across the country actively recruit talented AmeriCorps alumni for their reputation of perseverance, drive, and proven active citizenship. Many of these institutions offer a variety of incentives such as service scholarships or matching tuition funding to the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

For a list of matching institutions, please visit:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award/matching-institutions

Financial Aid

Determining the amount of financial aid for which a student is eligible can be a complicated process. The rules governing financial aid may contain terms that are hard to understand. Financial Aid Officers are trained to keep up with the ever-changing rules and legislation affecting federal student aid. Your school's Financial Aid Office can assist you in planning your financial aid over your college years.

Below is some basic guidance in making the most of your education award during your educational experience. In addition, there is important information that you can pass on to a Financial Aid Counselor which may help when he or she advises you on when and how to use your education award.

If you intend to apply for student financial aid as well as use your education award, payments from your education award, interest payments on your student loans and the living allowance you received during your service can affect your eligibility for some student aid in the school year after the payments were made.

- Under certain circumstances, your education award, living allowance, and Trust payments on accrued interest can be excluded from calculations determining your eligibility for student aid based on financial need. This could increase the amount of "need-based" aid for which you are eligible.
- Under different circumstances, using the education award can reduce the amount of other need-based student aid for which you are eligible.

Many schools will require you to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (commonly known as FAFSA) if you use your education award, even if you do not intend to apply for financial aid. The FAFSA can be completed online. If you are required to complete this form, complete it early and correctly. *A section of the form asks about your income reported to the IRS from the previous year. If you*

used your education award in the previous year, had interest payments made by AmeriCorps, or received a living allowance, be sure to include those amounts on the line where it asks for AmeriCorps benefits (awards, living allowances and interest payments)". This can give you a lower adjusted gross income and help you receive a better financial aid package.

Information You Can Give to Your Financial Aid Counselor

Dear Financial Aid Officer:

We are providing this information to assist you in understanding the relationships between AmeriCorps and FAFSA. An AmeriCorps member receives three types of benefits that are relevant to completing the FAFSA:

Living Allowance: AmeriCorps members may receive a living allowance to cover living expenses during their term of service.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award: After successfully completing a term of service, AmeriCorps members who are enrolled in the National Service Trust are eligible to receive an education award. The education award can be used to pay education costs at qualified institutions of higher education or training, or to repay qualified student loans. Members can use any portion of their education award and a member has up to seven years after his or her term of service has ended to claim the award.

Payment of interest on loans: The Corporation for National and Community Service pays interest on postponed qualified student loans for AmeriCorps members who successfully complete their term of service.

The member may also be earning Federal Work-Study wages for serving in an AmeriCorps project. All of these benefits should be included on the "income exclusion worksheet" of the FAFSA.

With respect to the education award and interest payment, the IRS has determined that these payments are subject to income taxes in the calendar years in which the payments are made. That taxable amount is reported on a 1099 form. When the student files a FAFSA for the following year, the amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award paid in the base year and included in that year's AGI, is to be excluded from the need analysis calculation. In most cases, the entire education award amount that was paid is taxable, so the entire amount that was paid is included in the AGI. Thus, the filer is to report the entire amount that was paid, not just the amount in excess of tuition, fees, books, and supplies.

When students use their education awards as a resource, it may reduce their eligibility for campus-based aid. Financial aid offices must consider the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award as a resource, or funds that you have available toward your cost of attendance, when considering your eligibility for campus-based aid. This includes the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), the Federal Work-Study Program, and Perkins Loans. (See 34 C.F.R. § 673.5(c).)

AmeriCorps VISTA members have some additional benefits. Whether they have elected the education award or the stipend, AmeriCorps VISTA members may be eligible for other types of loan postponements. Those who choose the stipend are also uniquely eligible for partial cancellation of Perkins loans.

Loan Forbearance and Interest Accrual

Forbearance

Individuals who are serving in a term of service in an approved AmeriCorps position may be eligible to temporarily postpone the repayment of their qualified student loans through an action called loan forbearance. While your loan is in forbearance during your term of service, interest continues to accrue. However, if you successfully complete your term of service the National Service Trust will pay all or a portion of the interest that accrued on your qualified student loans during your service period.

You can request that your loan company (your "loan holder") approve a forbearance for your qualified student loans during your service period. You can easily and quickly request the forbearance on-line through My AmeriCorps. After you finish your term of service, you will be responsible for repaying your loan according to the terms of the loan.

Eligibility for Forbearance

Individuals in approved AmeriCorps positions are eligible for forbearance for most federally-guaranteed student loans. If your loan holder tells you that your student loan does not qualify for forbearance based upon your national service, ask if your service qualifies you for some other type of forbearance or for a deferment.

The Corporation cannot approve or disapprove forbearance requests; it can only verify that you are in an approved national service position. Only the loan holder can determine your loan's eligibility and approve a request for forbearance If your loan is in default, it may not be eligible for forbearance. However, if you have loans that had gone into default before you began your national service, you can attempt to negotiate an arrangement with the loan holder or collection agency to bring the loan out of default so forbearance can be granted and interest can be paid.

How to Apply for Forbearance

After you have enrolled in an AmeriCorps project, you can go into your account in My AmeriCorps. In your home page, click on the "Create Forbearance" link at the top of the page to bring up the page to request forbearance. Follow the instructions. You will select your current term of service and identify the company that holds your student loan. When you click on "submit," a request will be sent electronically to your loan company. This request will verify your involvement in AmeriCorps and request that your qualified loans be put in forbearance during your service period.

Your loan holder will notify you when they have acted upon your request. You should contact your loan holder if you have not heard from them within four weeks of submitting your information online.

If the loan company has not registered in My AmeriCorps, they will not be on the list of institutions in the system. In this case, you should click on the institution "Not Found" link and follow the directions.

Interest Payments

Individuals who have successfully completed a term of service in AmeriCorps or Silver Scholars are eligible to have the Trust pay as much as 100% of the interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. The portion that the Trust will pay is determined by the type of service (full or part-time) and the length of your service period. The Trust will only pay interest on qualified student loans, as described on the Using your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award web page.

The Trust will not pay interest if you fail to complete your term of service. Exceptions will be made only if you fail to complete your term of service for compelling personal circumstances and you have earned a pro-rated award. It is up to your individual program to determine compelling personal circumstances. Examples that might be considered are a serious illness or injury, death of your immediate family member, or early closing of your project. An interest payment can only be made after you have completed your service and have earned an award.

Interest payments are in addition to your education award; they are not deducted from your education award amount. Interest payments are based upon the interest that accrued only during the time you were serving in the AmeriCorps program.

Remember that interest payments, as well as payments made from your education award account, are considered by the IRS to be taxable income in the year in which a payment is made.

How to Apply for an Interest Payment

After you have completed your service and received notification of your award, you can go into your account in My AmeriCorps. In your home page, click on the "Create Interest Accrual" link at the top of the page to bring up the page to request the payment. Follow the instructions. You will select the appropriate term of service and type of loan and identify the holder of your student loan. When you click on "submit," a notice will be sent electronically to your loan company. A record of your request will appear in your account home page.

This notice will verify your involvement in national service and request that the loan holder provide AmeriCorps with the amount of interest that accrued between your start date and end date of your service period. The loan company will provide additional information, then certify and submit the information electronically to AmeriCorps.

When the interest payment has been made, it will show up in your account. It should also show up in your account statement that the loan company provides to you.

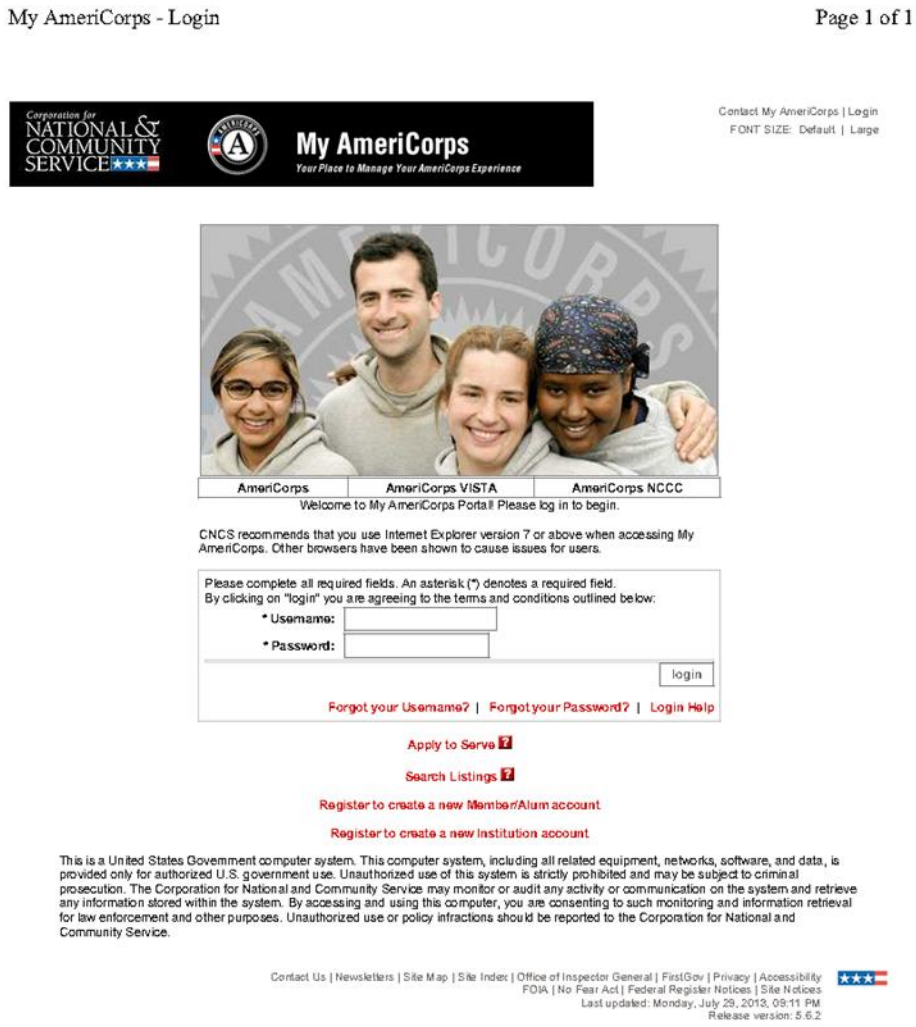
If your loan company has not registered in My AmeriCorps, they will not be on the list of institutions in the system. You should click on the institution "Not Found" link and follow the directions. These payment requests may need to be processed manually through paper forms and may take several weeks to complete.

The AmeriCorps Portal

In order to prevent a delay in the processing of interest payments, individuals must request payments electronically using our on-line system, My AmeriCorps. This is a secure, fast, and user-friendly method for requesting interest payments to be remitted to your loan holders. It also provides electronic records of payments requested and paid and there are no forms to mail in.

The Corporation for National and Community Service cannot guarantee the prompt and accurate processing of requests for interest payments using paper forms. Payments requested by paper can take up to six months or more for processing and are less secure.

It is fast and easy to access your National Service Participant account in My AmeriCorps. To register, go to https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do and click on "Register to create a new Member/Alum account" and follow the instructions.



VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

The VT ECO AmeriCorps Program

Section 2

SerVermont

The ECO AmeriCorps program is funded through Vermont's State Service Commission, SerVermont. Its mission is to support, promote and recognize volunteerism and community service in Vermont.

As a State Service Commission, SerVermont plays a vital role in translating national service dollars and initiatives into local results. State Service Commissions date back to the creation of the Corporation for National and Community Service with the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act as amended in 1993. They are the state partners of the federal agency the Corporation of National and Community Service. State Service Commissions administer AmeriCorps State, Volunteer Generation Fund, and volunteer programs to address the needs of the community as well as to engage citizens in service. SerVermont was established by Executive Order 09-98 on November 30, 1993 by Governor Howard Dean.

Organization

SerVermont is supported by 3 full time staff members. The staff manages the budget, plans and executes training and recognition events, administers grants for Vermont's AmeriCorps State programs, monitors those programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations, promotes inclusion within the programs, sets policy and program priorities, and plays a critical role in the state's emergency operations plan.

SerVermont is part of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, and national service is the means through which they work on the agency's mission to improve the health and well-being of Vermonters today and tomorrow, and to protect those in our community who are unable to protect themselves.

SerVermont's Activities

- Administering AmeriCorps State programs, including selecting, funding, monitoring and evaluation
- Running a statewide AmeriCorps VISTA umbrella project of 26 members
- Providing technical assistance and support to commission-funded programs, and whenever possible to all Corporation for National and Community Service funded programs in Vermont
- Providing opportunities to recognize the efforts of volunteers and organizations who contribute to meeting the needs of their communities through the Governor's Service Awards
- Updating a plan of service for the state on an annual basis
- Building on existing resources and networks to integrate training, technical assistance, funding and other support for all sate community service organizations
- Facilitating access to information needed by organizations and individuals regarding national service opportunities and programs throughout the state
- Managing volunteers in times of disaster

SerVermont's Impact

SerVermont funded AmeriCorps State members, including ECO AmeriCorps members, accomplished the following, and more, during the 2015-2016 program year:

- 18,073 individuals were served by AmeriCorps members
- 416 military families and veterans received support from AmeriCorps members
- 15,249 disadvantaged children and youth were served by AmeriCorps members
- 5,390 volunteers were recruited and directed by AmeriCorps members to offer service in their communities
- 254 low-income housing units were improved for safety and comfort by AmeriCorps members
- 30 community organizations received capacity building services from AmeriCorps members
- 131 staff of nonprofit and government agencies received cultural competency training from AmeriCorps members
- 140+ AmeriCorps members were available to assist in responding to disasters by staffing emergency shelters

The VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is part of the state of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources. The mission of the Department is, "To preserve, enhance, restore and conserve Vermont's natural resources, and protect human health for the benefit of this and future generations".

Organization

The Agency of Natural Resources is made up of three Departments:

- Forest, Parks and Recreation
- Fish and Wildlife
- Environmental Conservation

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is the largest department with just over 300 full time employees. There are seven divisions within DEC, the three divisions ECO AmeriCorps will be working with are: The Administration & Innovation Division, the Watershed Management Division, and the Waste Management & Prevention Division. Other divisions include Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection, Facilities Engineering, Environmental Assistance & Compliance, and Geology.

Administration and Innovation Division

The ECO AmeriCorps program is housed under the Planning Section of the Administration & Innovation Division. The Administration & Innovation Division provides cross departmental centralized services in the following areas:

- Planning
- Innovation (information technology)
- Business Transformation Initiative
- Personnel
- Finance

Watershed Management Division

The Watershed Management Division's (WSMD) mission is to protect, maintain, enhance and restore Vermont's surface waters, including Vermont's 800 lakes and ponds, 23,000 miles of rivers and streams and 300,000 acres of wetlands. Maintaining the health of Vermont's waterways provides for public and recreational uses, as well as supports healthy ecosystems.

The WSMD administers a number of programs to carry out its mission. Its Rivers, Lakes, and Wetlands programs provide for comprehensive management of these types of surface waters. The WSMD also administers Wastewater and Stormwater programs to respectively regulate

wastewater discharges and stormwater runoff. The Division's fifth program – the Monitoring, Assessment and Planning program – oversees the implementation of the Division's Statewide Surface Water Management Strategy, develops basin plans consistent with this strategy and supports laboratory services that measure the physical, chemical, and biological conditions of the State's surface waters. The Clean Water Initiative Program, formerly the Ecosystem Restoration Program, is responsible for the implementation of EPA-approved Clean Water Act restoration plans and priority clean water restoration activities, including the management of Ecosystem Restoration grants.

Waste Management & Prevention Division

The Waste Management & Prevention Division (WMPD) regulates Solid and Hazardous Waste management facilities to prevent waste generation where possible, to minimize impacts to the environment and human health when necessary, and to remediate, restore and redevelop contaminated sites to sustain community vitality.

The WMPD administers a number of programs to achieve its goals. The Solid Waste Management Program helps solid waste management district's plan and comply with Act 78, Vermont's solid waste management law. WMPD also certifies landfills and all other solid waste facilities, inspects these facilities, enforces permits, and reviews and approves applications for solid waste grant funds.

Staff members in the Recycling Section work with the state agencies, businesses, communities, and others to comply with Act 148 (Vermont's Universal Recycling law), identify effective and economical ways to reduce, re-use, or recycle waste as a means of conserving natural resources, minimizing waste treatment and disposal costs, and protecting human health.

Member Contacts

ECO AmeriCorps Program Staff

Dustin Bowman, *Program Coordinator*	802.461.5222	dustin.bowman@vermont.gov
Bonnie Woodford, Program Assistant	802.522.7648	bonnie.woodford@vermont.gov
Hannah Yates, *Team Leader*	802.249.1362	hannah.yates@partner.vermont.gov
Carey Hengstenberg, *Program Director*	802.595-1632	carey.hengstenberg@vermont.gov

Open Door Policy

ECO AmeriCorps maintains an open-door policy. This means members may contact the person they feel most comfortable addressing. In some cases, the issue may need to be shared and/or handled with other staff members. In this case, the person you originally addressed may still continue to serve as your point of contact. It is our belief that members should feel comfortable and safe approaching program staff on all matters.

Site Supervisor

ECO AmeriCorps supervisors are responsible for direct management of the members. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Creating work goals, daily tasks, and projects with/for you, as well as providing clear expectations and timeline specifications for each
- Training and supervising
- Providing you with the necessary equipment to complete your assigned duties
- Regularly checking in with you regarding your work and progress
- Approving and signing your time sheets, as well as monitoring your total hours

Your Direct Supervisor is the first in line at your site. Your supervisor should be contacted for all questions and needs that pertain to:

- Daily scheduling any time off (ECO staff should also be notified for extended absences)
- On-site service duties and tasks
- Issues related to direct service
- Training needs related to service

Mentor

Each ECO AmeriCorps member is paired up with a mentor during his/her year of service. Mentors are Natural Resource professionals from within the Agency of Natural Resources. Mentors help fill a very important role in your service experiences. Mentors may provide technical assistance to members. They may also provide personal and professional development guidance. The role of mentors is to augment the support provided by ECO Program Staff and Service Site Supervisors. Mentors should not assign tasks or projects, address conflicts, or assume other duties that are the responsibility of Program Staff and/or Site Supervisors. Mentors should communicate with Program Staff if they see a need for additional member support or guidance.

Matches have been made based on personal experiences and career interests. Your mentor may not be in an area or job that is directly relative to your ECO AmeriCorps position; our aim was to select a mentor that was more closely aligned with your overall professional interests. However, they may be great resources to you as you are working this year in Vermont. Mentors can advise on careers in Vermont, job seeking, networking, helping connect you to additional resources you may not be aware of, and being an advisor through this year. Mentors will not be involved in the specific duties that you'll be carrying out in your position.

Roles and Responsibilities for ECO AmeriCorps Mentors

Orientation/year start up (September)

- Attend portions of the ECO AmeriCorps orientation.
- Become familiar with the member's service site project as described in the position description and participate with the member and site supervisor in the development of the member's SMART goals and service plan.

Throughout the year

- Maintain regular contact with the ECO AmeriCorps member throughout his/her term of service. This may be approximately every two weeks by phone (or in person) during the first few months of the program, and then at least monthly thereafter. Provide feedback to ECO AmeriCorps Program Staff on a regular basis regarding his/her interaction with the member.
- Provide additional technical assistance, suggestions and encouragement during contact with member and help the member identify additional resources to ensure his/her success.
- Attend relevant portions of subsequent quarterly trainings (optional)
- Pay particular attention to project needs for training, how the member's activities line up with their position description, and for measuring achievement of project goals.
- Be alert to any issues impacting project success and consult with ECO Program Staff.

A mentor, by definition, is an experienced or trusted advisor. Mentors are people who guide us professionally or personally. Having a mentor at the beginning of your career is extremely valuable because it allows you the opportunity to learn from someone who has really been there before you. Gaining insight and advice through their experience helps to guide you while you are moving through your career, whether that is at the beginning, later in your career, or during a time of transition.

ECO AMERICORPS Overview

What is it?

ECO AmeriCorps was born out of the concept that communities in Vermont need help tackling some of the environmental problems facing our state. Part of the solution is placing ECO AmeriCorps Members in communities but also to train a workforce devoted to solving these problems to make long lasting environmental change. In fact, that is how we got the 'ECO' in our name - it stands for "Environmental Careers and Opportunities". You are serving in the fourth program year for ECO AmeriCorps. This year we have 20 water quality focused members and four members devoted to waste minimization and Universal Recycling. Most of our members are working directly with community organizations, municipalities and state agencies on providing outreach, conducting research, and initiating projects to improve water quality and reduce waste entering our landfills. Our program is comprised of 24 full time members serving with more than 30 service sites.

ECO AmeriCorps members implement strategies to protect and improve water quality as outlined under ACT 64: Vermont's Clean Water Law, and decrease waste entering landfills as outlined under ACT 148: Vermont's Universal Recycling and Composting Law.

This program provides participants an opportunity to prepare for a career in environmental conservation, while placing feet on the ground in a fight for clean water & waste minimization.

Why water quality?

New guidelines around excessive phosphorus and other nutrient levels in the Lake Champlain Basin and other bodies of water means careful vigilance and the employment of best practices to reduce nutrient pollution at the source. Lake Champlain is a major economic driver for tourism and recreation and provides drinking water for 200,000 people living near it. Phosphorus and other pollutants are entering Lake Champlain via streams and rivers resulting in ecosystem degradation, drinking water threats, and recreational impacts. Toxic algae blooms could have serious public health consequences. Heightening awareness and concentrating efforts to mitigate the run-off will meet the ultimate goal of improving and maintaining water quality in Lake Champlain and continuing the high quality of life all Vermonters value.

Why Universal Recycling?

It's estimated that more than half of the materials we throw away could be recycled or composted, leaving our recycling goals unmet and wasting natural resources and contributing to climate change. New guidelines require recycling and bans disposal of leaf and yard debris, clean wood, and food scraps by 2020. The increased capture of recyclable materials and a variety of meaningful alternatives for uneaten food and food scraps find value in materials previously considered waste, conserving resources and saving energy. Assisting solid waste facilities and haulers to increase their capacity for collection of recyclables and organic materials, and educating residents and businesses on the law, are vital steps towards successful implementation of Universal Recycling in Vermont.

Where do members serve?

ECO AmeriCorps partners with local municipalities, conservation districts, solid waste management districts, and non-profit organizations on current efforts to monitor water quality, implement projects, provide outreach and education, and plan future interventions. Activities upstream could carry the most impact. Service sites provide office space, access to office equipment, regular supervision, and have flexibility around ECO Vermont training and retreat days. Service sites pay a cash match of $6,500 for a full-time member.

What kinds of projects do members do?

- building green infrastructure
- restoring ecosystems
- outreach and education to farmers and other Vermonters
- project planning
- mapping
- outreach and education to residents, businesses, facilities and haulers about Universal Recycling requirements and how to recycle right, save money by not wasting food, donate quality food for people in need, and how to compost
- data collection and surveys

What are the service site requirements?

Service sites must provide meaningful service opportunities, regular supervision with oversight of service hours and timesheets, office space and office equipment, orientation to service site, additional training (as needed), and mileage reimbursement for service-related travel.

Service sites must provide a detailed service plan outlining the projects their ECO AmeriCorps member will be assigned. Service projects should address water-related or waste management issues and protect critical watersheds while providing valuable educational and professional development opportunities for ECO AmeriCorps members. Service Site applications are evaluated by a team from the Department of Environmental Conservation and ECO AmeriCorps to select projects best suited for the program.

In addition, each service site will provide a cash match of:

- $7,000 per full-time ECO AmeriCorps member (1,700 hours, roughly 40 hours per week)

Our Values: At ECO AmeriCorps we recognize the “why” of something is just as important as the “what”. Our wish is to inspire a community of individuals committed to working together to create a better and safer Vermont. At ECO, we feel a tremendous responsibility to be the change we wish to see in others. Caring for this amazing place requires we serve to protect the natural world and that we take the difficult steps now to mitigate our program’s effects on the environment. To this end, ECO AmeriCorps will develop, over the course of 2018-19, a waste and carbon reduction strategy to reduce our operation footprint to better represent the environmental ethic that drives us. We are striving to turn our experience partnering with community organizations into meaningful change that proactively closes the gap between talk and action.

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ECO AmeriCorps

2018-2019 Performance Goals

ECO AmeriCorps tracks three national performance measures established by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Accomplishments in these three areas are reported on a semi-annual basis to CNCS. The reporting guidance and record keeping described below is established by CNCS guidelines.

1. Water Quality Improvement

Performance measurement:
Number of miles of trails or waterways (owned/maintained by national, state, county, city or tribal governments; nonprofits when for public use or the public good; and public easements) that are treated and/or constructed, or number of miles that are improved and/or put into use.

Note: Accomplishments reported under this performance measure must be specified as either miles of trails or waterways treated/constructed or miles of trails or waterways improved/put into use. *See guidance below.*

Challenge:
Most streams in Vermont are not in an equilibrium condition because riverside development, channelization practices and other historic land uses have prevented the river from assuming its most stable natural shape. In addition, many rivers have lost access to their floodplains and lack adequate riparian buffers. These conditions contribute to active erosion of stream banks and increased sediment and nutrient loads. Restoration and protection of river corridors and special flood hazard areas is critical for attenuation of flows, stream bank stability, and pollutant reduction.

Desired Outcome:
ECO AmeriCorps members will treat and/or improve 10 miles of rivers to combat this issue.

CNCS Water Quality Improvement Reporting Guidance*

Definition of Key Terms:
Trails: For walking, running, biking, horses or other forms of recreation. **Waterways:** Includes rivers, lakes and other bodies of water on or abutting public land. **Treated:** Removed invasive species, planted native plants, built riparian buffers, improved tread/corridor of existing trail or made changes to increase the trail lifespan, removed unsafe trail structures, repaired damage caused by visitor use, made changes to increase accessibility, cleared of natural debris (such as fallen trees/limbs and hazardous fuel) and unnatural debris (such as disaster debris and improperly disposed waste). Treatments must go beyond basic trash removal. **Constructed:** Making new trails available by implementing safety measures, making handicapped accessible, or environmental protection measures such as boardwalks, grading, trail-blazing, converting a railroad bed to a trail, etc. that make trails newly available. **Improved:** Restored to reduce human impact, reduced the impact of natural disasters, removed invasive species, restored native plants and habitat, protected watersheds, created new trail, increased safe condition of useable trails, increased accessibility, protected flora and fauna. Improvement should be consistent with an accepted natural resource restoration, maintenance or improvement plan. **Put into use:** Established safe and useable trails or waterways.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data for trails/waterways treated/constructed:
Sum of number of miles of trails and/or waterways that are treated, and/or constructed. **Count each mile only once during the program year.** Count the area treated on/in the trail/waterway and immediately next to the trail/waterway. It may be necessary to treat the same mile of trail/waterway more than once but include in count only once. If, for example, the program or project is to repair a trail, then the whole width of the trail that is being repaired can be counted, not just the width of the fencing. If the lack of a trail has led to damage in the area, then the area of that restoration/repair work would count too.

How to record accomplishments for trails/waterways treated/constructed:
Tracking document, survey or acknowledgement of receipt of services from entity that owns or administers the trail or waterways improved.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data for trails/waterways improved/put into use:
Sum of number of miles of trails and/or waterways that are assessed by the managing entity/land manager as having been improved to an acceptable level as defined by the sponsoring agency or land manager in accordance with their natural resource plan. **Count each mile only once during the program year.** It is possible that the number of miles assessed by the land manager as having been improved in accordance with their natural resource plan is less than the total number of miles treated. The improvement should be the acceptable level of implementation of the prescribed intervention to address a certain deficiency or serious environmental risk that is well documented. The evidence-base could be a governmental land management improvement plan if it addresses the targeted problem, and it is preferable to describe how the proposed intervention will contribute to the return the targeted area to a quality environment.

How to record accomplishments for trails/waterways improved/put into use:
Tracking document, survey or acknowledgement of receipt of services from entity that owns or administers the trail or waterways improved. Distinction must be made between treated/constructed and improved/put into use.

Accomplishments reported under the Water Quality Improvement performance measure* ***cannot* *also be reported under the Ecosystem Enhancement performance measure.*

2. Ecosystem Enhancement

Performance Measurement:
Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public and tribal lands that are treated, and number of acres that are improved.

Note: Accomplishments reported under this performance measure must be specified as either acres of land treated or acres of land improved. *See guidance below.*

Challenge:
Impacts of development on public land require mitigation to reduce non-point source pollution by retrofit and enhancing sites to improve ecological and hydrological function.

Desired Outcome:
ECO AmeriCorps treat and/or improve 200 acres of public land to improve waterways. Each project will be validated by the service site supervisor. Before and after photos will be submitted and retained for each project.

Ecosystem Enhancement Reporting Guidance

Definition of Key Terms:
National parks, State parks, city parks, county parks: Park/recreation areas that are designated by national, state, city, or county governments (not trails or rivers) **Other public lands:** Other publicly owned lands; land owned by nonprofits for public use or the public good (such as land conservancies): and public easements. **Tribal lands:** Same meaning as imparted by the definitions of “Indian Lands” and “Indian Tribes” provided in. SEC. 101. [42 U.S.C. 12511]. **Treated:** National service members and/or program volunteers removed invasive species, planted native plants, built riparian buffers, cleared of natural debris (such as fallen trees/limbs, hazardous fuel) and unnatural debris (such as disaster debris and improperly disposed waste). Treatment must go beyond basic trash removal. **Improved:** Renovated to reduce human impact or the negative impact of natural disasters or invasive species, restored native plants and habitat, reduced erosion, protected watersheds, reduced wildfire risk, upgraded or repaired outdoor recreation facilities or signage, increased public safe access, protected flora and fauna. Improvement should be consistent with an accepted natural resource restoration, maintenance or improvement plan.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Ecosystem Enhancement Data:
Count of number of acres that are **treated** for the intent of improvement **or** that have been **improved** to an acceptable level as defined by the sponsoring agency or land manager in accordance with their natural resource plan. **Count each acre that is treated only once during the program year.** It may be necessary to treat an acre more than once, but it should be counted only once. Only count the acres that are actually treated or improved; do not count the entire park/land area unless your project treats or improves the entire area. It is possible that the number of acres assessed by the land manager as having been improved in accordance with their natural resource plan is less than the total number of acres treated.

Accomplishments reported under the Ecosystem Enhancement performance measure **cannot also be reported under the Water Quality Improvement performance measure.*

How to Record Ecosystem Enhancement Accomplishments:
Tracking document, survey or acknowledgement of receipt of services from entity that owns or administers the area improved. Tracking document or survey stating the number of acres actually improved and a statement that the impact of this intervention will contribute to the return of the targeted area to a quality environment from entity that owns or administers the area improved.

3. Agricultural Environmental Stewardship

Performance Measurement:
Number of individuals receiving education or and/or environmentally-conscious practices, and Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or the intent to change behavior within one year in order to better protect the environment and/or reduce energy consumption as a result of the educational event or training they received.

Challenge:
Nutrient export from agricultural operations impairs adjacent waterways and leads to eutrophication of lakes and ponds. Additional education and outreach to farmers is needed to increase implementation of best management practices, particularly on small farms which are not often targeted.

Desired Outcome:
ECO AmeriCorps members will provide educational resources and information to farmers regarding acceptable agricultural practices (AAP's). Members will provide environmental stewardship education and/or training to 1000 individuals. At least 200 individuals will report a change in behavior or an intent to change behavior as a result of this outreach. This will be tracked via follow-up surveys with individual trainees to determine if they have initiated a project, applied for funding and/or completed a project within 6 months of the training.

Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Reporting Guidance

Definition of Key Terms:
Education or Training: May be one-time or an on-going series; cannot just be distribution of pamphlets or information available on a web-site; should have learning objectives; may be in person or through a web-based interface. **Environmental Stewardship and/or environmentally conscious practices:** Organized efforts to teach about how natural environments function and, particularly, how human beings can manage their behavior and ecosystems in order to live sustainably. Environmental topics should relate to real conditions in the community being served. **Change in behavior or Intent to change behavior:** Individuals state practices that they do now or plan to do that are encouraged or recommended by the training or educational event which are different than the practices they had prior to the training.
How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Data:
Count of each individual participating in the educational event or training. **Some individuals may attend multiple events or trainings, but they should only be counted once**. If providing the training through classroom curriculum, count the individuals present not just those enrolled. If providing the training through a school assembly presentation, get the best estimate from school officials of the number in attendance. The educational events or training should be in response to a specifically identified need in the community to either increase knowledge or to change behavior.

How to Record Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Accomplishments:
Sign-in or attendance sheets from education/training sessions when possible. Tracking needs to enable unduplicated count when possible. Surveys should be utilized to assess a change in (or intent to change) behavior of the participants. It is preferable to assess an actual change in behavior at some point after the educational event or training to determine if the change has actually occurred. However, assessments are expected to occur within the service year.

2018-19 Training and Events Calendar

SEPTEMBER 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th – Member Orientation. *Supervisors and mentors attend on Sept. 13th from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 29 – National Public Lands Day (Service Project)

OCTOBER 19 – Regional gathering/Service project (Central/South)

OCTOBER 26 – Regional gathering/Service project (North)

November 2 – Intergenerational Diversity Training *(Each member and host site staff must attend one of two dates)*

NOVEMBER 9 – Intergenerational Diversity Training *(Each member and host site staff must attend one of two dates)*

December 3-7* – SerVermont Fall Conference

January 11 – All-day training/ECO meeting

JANUARY 21 – MLK Day service project

FEBRUARY 22 –All-day training/ECO meeting

MARCH 22 – Regional gathering/service project (Central/South)

MARCH 29 – Regional gathering/service project (North)

MARCH 15 – All-day training/ECO meeting

APRIL 3* – Mayor's Day of Appreciation for National Service

APRIL 12th - All-day training/ECO meeting

APRIL 22 – Earth Day service project

MAY 5 – Vermont Green Up Day (Members serve on projects in their local communities)

MAY 16-17*– SerVermont Spring Conference

JUNE 20-21 – Overnight ECO training/service project

AUGUST 9 – ECO AmeriCorps End of year celebration

*Denotes date is tentative

Policies on Member Training/Service Project Attendance

- Members are expected to attend all trainings and service projects listed above, and agree to do so in the Member Agreement.
- Other training days will possibly be made available as 'optional.' Members must communicate with supervisors about upcoming trainings and are required to obtain permission from them to attend 'optional' trainings.
- Members may also be sent to trainings by their sponsoring sites
- Members may not spend more than 20% of their service/training hours in training
- Members who are unable to attend training due to circumstances out of the member's control (i.e. illness, family emergency, etc.) must notify program staff in writing as soon as possible.
- Members may not miss a training to serve regular hours at their site. If a member misses a training day and claims hours for service at the host site, these hours will not be approved.

ECO AmeriCorps Program Initiatives

Independent Service Projects (ISP)

All Members are expected to complete a minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 independent service project hours for the service term. The following guidelines apply to ISP projects:

1. ISP hours may not be served at the member's host site. Hours should be served in partnership with another nonprofit, educational, or governmental community organization.
2. ISP hours cannot be served during regular service hours. They must be served during evenings, weekends, or other times that the member is not scheduled to serve at his/her regular service site. A member cannot take "leave" from regular service to accomplish ISP hours or complete ISP hours in lieu of regular service.
3. ISP opportunities must be approved from ECO AmeriCorps in advance. Requests should be submitted via email to program staff.
4. The project/organization must be based in Vermont.
5. At the completion of the ISP hours, the member must submit a completed ISP form to his/her site supervisor and ECO AmeriCorps program staff in order for the hours to be approved. A copy of the ISP form is available at the end of this section.
6. Members may collaborate in pairs or teams to complete ISP hours.
7. All ISP activities must fall within AmeriCorps regulations and guidelines.

Inter-site training and service opportunities

ECO AmeriCorps allows members to claim hours for approved inter-site training and service opportunities in cooperation with other ECO AmeriCorps service sites. Site supervisors and members are encouraged to share training and service project opportunities available at their site with other ECO AmeriCorps members. Member participation must be pre-approved by both the visiting member's supervisor and by the supervisor at the site being visited. Participation in these events is not required, but ECO AmeriCorps strongly encourages members and sites to take advantage of these partnership opportunities. If site supervisors have training and/or service opportunities that they would like to make available to all members, they should contact ECO AmeriCorps staff.

ECO AmeriCorps Independent Service Form

This form must be used to track completed ISP hours. All hours must be completed through a registered non-profit or governmental organization. Independent service cannot conflict with service at your regular assigned service site. All sites must be approved by ECO AmeriCorps staff prior to service. Once approval has been granted, it is not necessary to seek approval for the same site again. All hours must be validated by a representative at the organization for which you are volunteering. Submit this completed form to your site supervisor along with your regular timesheet for authorization and email a scanned copy to Dustin once completed and signed.

Member name: _____

Independent service organization: _____

Independent service contact phone number: _____

Date(s) of service: _____

Total hours served: _____

Brief description of service (attach additional sheet if necessary):

_____

_____

Independent service representative (name & title) _____

Independent service representative (signed): _____

VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Program Practices & Regulations

Section 3

Living Allowance

Living Allowance is the term used to describe the financial benefit that members receive from ECO AmeriCorps. The living allowance is not considered to be a salary or an hourly wage. Under the law that established AmeriCorps, a member is not an employee, and does not receive a wage or salary.

For the 2018-2019 program year, members will receive a maximum living allowance amount of **$16,500.**

The amount listed above is the gross amount and does not account for tax and FICA withholding amounts. The member is expected to pay all applicable local, state and federal taxes. These are withheld under standard withholding rules. The member may be eligible for a withholding exemption if no tax liability was withheld last year, and the exemption is expected to remain the same for the upcoming year. Withholding amounts are based upon federal and state law based on information provided by the member on his/her IRS W-4 form.

The living allowance will be distributed every other week only while the member is actively serving. If a member does not serve during the living allowance period which is a minimum of 15 days in a row, the member must be suspended and will not receive a living allowance.

Your living allowance will be issued via direct deposit every other Friday. The living allowance is not based on actual hours served in a given pay period, and will not fluctuate based on the number of hours served per week. The living allowance **cannot be** paid on an hourly basis or be tied to hours served in any way. Instead it is divided evenly by the number of pay periods (typically, 24) during the member's contracted term of service. It is designed to help members meet their living needs while in service. If you fall behind in hours, and are at risk to successfully complete the number of service hours needed to fulfill your term of service by the last day, the ECO AmeriCorps staff will work with you to modify your schedule to get back on track. Though your living allowance will not be affected, you will not receive your Education Award if you do not serve at least 1,700 hours during your term of service.

The living allowance may affect the member's eligibility for various federal assistance programs. The living allowance will not affect eligibility for federal work-study assistance, federal student aid, SSI, food stamps, Section 8 or public housing. It may however affect, AFDC (Aid for Families with Dependent Children), SSDI, and Medicaid.

State and private student aid may or may not be affected, depending upon individual school regulations. Effects on state assistance programs will depend on state regulations.

Please note: The timesheet is the primary source of documentation for ECO AmeriCorps to determine whether or not the member has been actively serving and what activities the member has been performing. If you fail to submit timesheets for two weeks or longer, ECO AmeriCorps will not have record of your service activities and will assume you have not been serving. When this happens, the member will be placed in suspension. When this occurs, living allowance payments are also suspended. A suspended member will be reinstated once all timesheets have been submitted to ECO AmeriCorps in full.

Contracted Term

You are contracted to serve beginning with an assigned start date of September 12, 2016, through your contracted end date of August 12, 2017. In addition to the minimum service-hour commitment, you have agreed to serve for the entirety of the contracted term.

Contract Amendments

As unforeseen circumstances may arise over the course of the service term, it may be possible to amend your contract with ECO AmeriCorps to end early or extend your service. When amending contract dates, a member must still serve the contracted number of service hours. Amendments must be approved by both ECO AmeriCorps and your service site. **Approval of contract amendments is not guaranteed**, and will be approved only in qualifying circumstances. Simply completing 1,700 hours prior to the contracted end date does not constitute a qualifying circumstance, nor does a scheduled vacation or recreation activity. ***You have committed to 11 months of ECO AmeriCorps service, and you are expected to fulfill that commitment in order to successfully complete the program.***

Examples of contract amendments:

- A member may decide to begin graduate school and need to leave the AmeriCorps position a few weeks early to attend. This member may request to shorten the term of service.
- A member may have to unexpectedly take time off to care for an ill child or parent. This member may request to extend the contract to complete the required hours.

To Shorten Term of Service:

If members would like to end service early, and that date is at least nine (9) months after the start date then members should—

- Submit a written letter to the ECO AmeriCorps Program Director, **at least sixty (60) days prior to the original end date and forty-five (45) days prior to the requested amended end date**, listing the new end date and signed by both the member and the site supervisor. If the supervisor does not agree, then the date cannot be changed.
- The Program Director will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions.

To Extend Term of Service:

If members want to extend the end of service date, as long as the date is not more than twelve (12) months after his/her start date then the member should—

- Submit a written letter to the ECO AmeriCorps Program Director, **at least forty-five (45) days prior to the original end date**, listing the new end date and signed by both the member and site supervisor; and if the supervisor does not agree, then the date cannot be changed.
- ECO AmeriCorps will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions.

When amending an end date, amount of maximum living allowance does not change. The remaining living allowance amount will be recalculated and bi-weekly living allowance payouts will be adjusted accordingly.

Service Hour Commitment

As an ECO AmeriCorps member, you are contracted to fulfill **at least 1,700 hours** of service**.**

This is the minimum number of hours you must serve in order to successfully complete the program and receive the education award. The number of hours served may include only up to 20% approved training hours and 10% fundraising hours.

In order to successfully complete the term of service, you are required to not only complete your service hour requirement, but also fulfill the dates of service agreed upon in your contract. When circumstances warrant, a contract may be amended if signed by the member, the Program Director and the sponsoring site is completed (please see following page).

Members that do not complete the required hours will be exited as follows:

> **FOR CAUSE**: The member is exited for reasons within his/her control. The member will not receive any portion of the education award, and the living allowance will cease immediately. Examples of "cause" are leaving the AmeriCorps program to accept a paid position, to attend school without completing hours, to relocate, etc.
>
> **FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**: When exited for compelling personal circumstances, the member may be eligible for a pro-rated education award. These are circumstances beyond the member's control occur, for example:
>
> - The member has a serious injury or illness
> - There is a serious injury, illness or death of an immediate family member and the member is needed to care for that family member
> - The member is drafted by the Armed Services of the United States
> - Some other circumstance occurs that makes it impossible or very difficult for the member to complete the term of service and if the ECO AmeriCorps Program Director deems that circumstance to be compelling.

You have a maximum of one year to complete the required number of hours. After one year, you are no longer eligible to serve. If your hours are not complete, you cannot be exited successfully and will not receive an education award. If unforeseen circumstances arise, members may be placed in "suspension". The time that a member is in suspension does not count toward the year limit.

Service Expectations

Types of Service

Service: Direct Service is the bulk of what you will do this year. This includes all activities on the position description that are not considered training or fundraising, and all activities that fall within AmeriCorps guidelines.

Training: You will receive extensive training over the course of the service year. Training includes both professional development and technical assistance. Training will be provided by the program, SerVermont, and the member's host site.

Fundraising: While you may claim up to 10% of your service hours as fundraising activities, fundraising activities are limited in the following manner:

- As an AmeriCorps member you may raise resources directly in support of your program's service activities.
- Examples of fundraising activities ECO AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
    - Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
    - Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
    - Securing financial resources from the community to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through the members of a community-based organization;
    - Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.
- AmeriCorps members may not:
    - Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
    - Write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.

Mandated Reporter Training

MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

All AmeriCorps members serving in Vermont are considered Mandated Reporters under state law.

Each member is required to complete and online training course (including a test) within the first month of service. A certificate of completion will be on file with the ECO AmeriCorps Program.

For more information and link to the training:
http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated/reporters

Who are mandated reporters in Vermont?

- Health care provider, including any chiropractor, dentist, emergency medical personnel, hospital administrator, intern, licensed practical nurse, medical examiner, osteopath, pharmacist, physician, physician assistant, psychologist, registered nurse, resident physician, and surgeon
- Individual who is a) employed by a school district or an approved or recognized independent school or b) contracted and paid by a school district or an approved or recognized independent school to provide student services, including any school superintendent, school principal, headmaster of an approved or recognized independent school, school teacher, student teacher, school librarian, and school guidance counselor
- **Agency of Human Services employee, contractor, or grantee who has contact with clients**
- Camp administrator, counselor, and owner, including any residential and nonresidential camp and recreational program
- Childcare worker
- Clergy member
- Mental health professional
- Police officer
- Probation officer
- Social worker

What is my legal obligation to report?

If you reasonably suspect child abuse or neglect, you are legally required to make a report to our Family Services Division (FSD) — within 24 hours of the time you first received or observed information about the suspected abuse/neglect.

How do I make a report?

Call **1-800-649-5285** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911 or call your local police first.
Then, call FSD to make a report. Calling law enforcement is not the same as reporting to FSD. You must notify FSD directly.

Program Benefits

Child Care

As a full-time AmeriCorps member you are eligible to apply for Childcare benefits. Benefits are based on enrollment status AND income eligibility.

For information on eligibility, speak with your program staff.

Healthcare

As a full-time member you are eligible for healthcare provided through ECO AmeriCorps. The premium is paid entirely by the program, and members are responsible for co-pays. Members must accept the AmeriCorps-provided health insurance if they do not have access to other health care coverage. More information on the Health Care plan ECO AmeriCorps uses can be found in section 6.

Member Assistance Program

As a full-time member you are automatically enrolled in the Member Assistance Program MAP) provided by America's Service Commissions. This is a free, confidential, member support program available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to assist members experience personal and/or professional issues. More information on the MAP plan can be found in section 6.

Travel, Mileage and Accommodations

Costs associated with travel required by ECO AmeriCorps will be covered or reimbursed in full by the program, including overnight accommodations if required.

All mileage required by the program will be reimbursed at the current Federal General Services Administration (GSA) rate set for mileage reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement between service sites or otherwise required by your host site is the responsibility of your host site. Host sites also reimburse at the current GSA rate. Mileage reimbursement cannot be paid for travel to and from your first daily service site (i.e. regular commute travel), or for any collaboration with another member's project/host site.

Mileage reimbursement must be turned in to ECO AmeriCorps within a month of the travel, or the member risks losing the reimbursement.

More information can be found in Section 4 of this manual.

Member Expectations

Background Checks

All members must submit to a background check. All members are subject to an FBI Criminal History Check, Sex Offender Registry Check, and Adult/Child Abuse Check through the Vermont Agency of Human Services. In addition to the FBI Criminal History Check, members that applied to serve while living in a state other than Vermont must also undergo a criminal history check through that state.

Members may not serve unsupervised with vulnerable populations until ECO AmeriCorps has received at least one of the criminal history checks without a criminal record. Vulnerable populations are defined as youth, elderly, or persons with disabilities. Program staff will notify the member and supervisor once the results have been received and the member is cleared to serve unsupervised.

If the criminal history check results are received with a criminal record, further action will be required. Murder or sexual assault automatically disqualifies a member for service. All other criminal records are taken on a case-by-case basis and will be assessed for relevancy to service, recent activity, and action for recourse. Members will be asked to respond to any criminal records before the conviction will be assessed.

Uniform/AmeriCorps Logo

Members are expected to wear/display the AmeriCorps logo at all times when in service. This includes while at your office/usual service location, while attending ECO AmeriCorps events, and when out in the field/community. ECO AmeriCorps provides you with shirts, sweatshirts, patches, pins, and stickers. ECO AmeriCorps shirts must be worn any time you are serving in the field/community. Pins, patches, or other items displaying the AmeriCorps logo may be worn while serving at your office.

Although you are not forbidden from displaying the AmeriCorps logo while not serving, please remember that any time you are displaying the logo you are representing AmeriCorps. Therefore, you should refrain from any AmeriCorps prohibited activities when wearing the AmeriCorps logo.

Being identified as an AmeriCorps member while providing service is essential to the sustainability and longevity of the ECO AmeriCorps program per the instructions of the Corporation for National and Community Service. As an ECO AmeriCorps member you must commit to wearing the AmeriCorps Member uniform during all community service outreach hours, and as often as possible during regular service hours, as dress codes permit.

Dress codes may vary by Host Site. Members should adhere to the dress codes of their host sites but also ensure that AmeriCorps uniform expectations are being met.

You are expected to dress appropriately at all times when serving. Professional attire should be worn while working in professional settings – such as conducting trainings or outreach.

Work clothes should be worn while on any type construction, environmental or maintenance duty. Work boots and protective gear must be worn on all assignments that put you at any level of increased risk of physical harm.

Weekly Member Spotlights

ECO AmeriCorps spotlights 2-3 members each week in our weekly programmatic updates. The team leader will create a schedule to let each member know when they will be spotlighted. Members should write a short (less than 300 word) description highlighting their recent service and submit a photo of him/herself in service while wearing the AmeriCorps A. After supervisor review, the description and photo should be submitted to the team leader according to the established timeframe.

Newsletters

ECO AmeriCorps collects service-related member information and publishes a regular newsletter. **Each member is expected to submit information for the newsletter at least once during their service term**. Multiple submissions are welcome. Submissions may be a story of your service, a reflection, a recap of event, something you've learned through your service, hints and tips for other members, etc. Please include photos with your submission if possible.

Employment Outside Service

Opportunities may arise for you to take a "second job" in addition to your ECO AmeriCorps service. If you are considering employment, please notify your site supervisor and ECO Program staff to ensure that your work obligations will not interfere with your service commitment. Members are not authorized to serve in conjunction with employment that conflicts with their scheduled service, and absence resulting from additional employment will not be approved. Employment during non-scheduled service hours (evenings and most weekends) may be considered, but authorization is not guaranteed. You have committed yourself to a year of service to Vermont's environment. This commitment must take precedence over all other employment opportunities in order for you to successfully complete your service.

Press Guidelines

1. Please describe us as **ECO AmeriCorps.**

2. **We serve in partnership** with multiple community organizations across the state, and we together partner with multiple other organizations, schools, community groups, etc. While good publicity is always helpful in spreading the word about ECO AmeriCorps, it is important that the community collaboration gets the primary focus of the publicity.

3. Please **email all written press materials to ECO AmeriCorps staff for pre-approval**. Send a copy of printed materials to Program Staff when they're in print, regardless of prior approval.

4. **Do not mention any political party** or position **when describing our program** and/or its services. We are fortunate in Vermont to have what amounts to tri-partisan support from our Senators, Representative and Governor. AmeriCorps is part of the National Service Network and our work is non-partisan.

5. **The AmeriCorps logo may not** be used: on materials that will be sold, on promotional materials of donors, or on clothing not worn by members, alums, or affiliated staff. The logo may not be altered or used as a part of any other logo.

6. You may want to use the logo in other materials. Publications (newsletters, etc.) that are distributed externally should include the following acknowledgement and **disclaimer** when the logo is used prominently:

"This material is based upon work supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of AmeriCorps or the Corporation for National Service."

7. We must also ensure that **publications are consistent with grant provisions** limiting member activities (for example, no lobbying or religious materials).

8. It is required that if you are going to disclose the names or photos of community partners in conjunction with articles about AmeriCorps projects, you should obtain permission first. Although verbal permission is legal, *written waivers* are preferable.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact:
INSERT Name
INSERT Email
INSERT Phone

ECO AmeriCorps and USDA Rural Development Partner for Earth Day

Montpelier, VT - Friday, April 22nd is Earth Day. To celebrate, ECO AmeriCorps members will be at community events across the state having conversations with Vermonters about why water matters. Look for ECO AmeriCorps members in St. Albans at the Maple Festival, in Burlington at the ECHO Center, at the City of Montpelier's Rec Field on Elm St, at the White River Partnership in South Royalton and in Williamstown at the Department of Public Safety building during the afternoon to learn more about why water matters.

ECO AmeriCorps has also partnered with the USDA Rural Development office to celebrate updates to the Williamstown Wastewater Treatment Facility. Under Secretary for USDA Rural Development Lisa Mensah, Vermont Congressman Peter Welch, and Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Alyssa Schuren will speak at the event. Following the press conference, ECO AmeriCorps members and other volunteers will participate in a service project removing tires along a stream bank in Williamstown.

ECO AmeriCorps is a program administered by the VT Dept. Environmental Conservation. The program consists of 24 members serving statewide with partner organizations dedicated to improving Vermont's water quality and minimizing the amount of waste entering landfills. For more information about ECO AmeriCorps, visit www.ecoamericorps.vermont.gov.

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency for service and volunteering. CNCS annually engages more than five million citizens in service at more than 60,000 locations in 8,500 cities across the country through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs. National service participants address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and nation, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to preserving the environment and helping communities recover from natural disasters. For more information on AmeriCorps, visit www.americorps.gov.

Benefit Contacts

AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program (MAP)

As an ECO AmeriCorps Member, you have access to a Member Assistance Program (MAP) through **All One Health**. The MAP offers free and confidential short-term counseling sessions and other benefits such as referrals to attorneys or financial counselors. Issues that MAPs commonly assist with include grief and loss, substance abuse, workplace issues, relationship problems, legal issues, financial problems, and more.

To find out more or to access this ***free and confidential*** service call **800.451.1834** or visit their website www.allonehealth.com. The password to access services is: **ASC.**

Worker's Compensation Insurance

ECO AmeriCorps members are covered by the STATE OF VERMONT's worker's compensation insurance provided by PMA. Claims should be filed through the PMA website here: http://www.pmacompanies.com/. If you are injured during service-related activities, you must report your injury through this link. In addition, contact Dustin immediately to inform him of the injury, and for him to assist you with filing the claim if needed. It is important to complete the form **even if medical attention is not needed** to ensure that you will be covered should medical attention be required later on. The form must be completed within 72 hours of the injury.

Health care

The health care plan provided by ECO AmeriCorps, known as The Corps Network, is administered by Summit America. More info in Section 6 of this manual. For all questions regarding health care benefits, please visit **www.summitamerica-ins.com** or contact Summit America at:

1-800-301-9128 **thecorpsnetwork@summitamerica-ins.com**

AmeriCorps Alums

AmeriCorps Alums is the national AmeriCorps alumni network – with more than 1 million members. Registration is free and there are a number of benefits available to AmeriCorps Alums ranging from discounts on things like car insurance to career resources to guidance on utilizing your education award, and much more. Members are eligible to register as soon as they begin their AmeriCorps service. This is a great resource to help answer questions and understand benefits associated with your service. **www.americorpsalums.org**

My AmeriCorps Portal

Program staff is able to answer general questions regarding the education award, loan interest accrual, and school loan forbearance.

For specific questions regarding the education award, interest accrual, forbearance, or for any issues logging in or using the *MyAmeriCorps Portal*, please contact the Portal help desk at the contact info listed below. This system is administered nationally and program staff does not have any additional access to or oversight of individual members' accounts.

Help Desk: **800-942-2677**
Fax: **703-206-7276**

Make a request online at: **https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_mac**

The National Service Trust

The Trust is the entity that manages the education award. They can be reached at 1-888-507-5960 OR 202-606-5000 ext. 347 or by visiting www.americorps.gov.

VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Forms & Paperwork

Section 4

Paperwork and Forms Overview

Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork! Please be aware that serving in AmeriCorps isn't all fun and games – there's also a lot of paperwork. Our program makes an effort to minimize the amount of time members spend on forms and paperwork by consolidating forms and keeping organized records. Please understand that ECO AmeriCorps staff are not in this field because we love paperwork. We ask for your diligence in submitting timely, complete, and thorough paperwork as required so that we may all keep our focus on service.

Below is a summary of the paperwork you'll be required to submit for the program year:

Enrollment

- Application through MyAmeriCorps
- 2 written letters of recommendation
- Member Agreement/Contract with original signature
- Position Description
- Enrollment Form (through MyAmeriCorps)
- W-4
- I-9 with original signature
- I-9 Documentation
- Direct Deposit Sheet
    - Includes voided check
- ECO AmeriCorps Program Enrollment Form
- Health Care Roster or Waiver with original signature
- Childcare Roster or Waiver with original signature
- Member Goals and Self-Assessment
- On-site Orientation Checklist
- Loan Forbearance request (in My AmeriCorps)

Criminal Background Check

- FBI Criminal History Check
- State Criminal History Check (if required)
- Sex Offender Registry check
- Abuse Registry check form
- Child Abuse Registry check
- Adult Abuse Registry check

Mid-Year

- Mid-Term Member Performance Review signed by both Member & supervisor
- Quarterly Activities Reports Qtrs.: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Quarterly Volunteer Logs Qtrs.: 1, 2, 3, 4

Closing

- Exit Form (in MyAmeriCorps)
- Contract Amendment (if last day served is not last day as listed in contract)
- Final Member Performance Review signed by both ACM & supervisor
- End of Term Survey
- Supervisor Evaluation
- Portfolio (Not applicable if re-upping for second term)
- Interest Accrual Request (in MyAmeriCorps)

Other/As Needed

- All Weekly timesheets submitted and approved
- Incident Report Form
- Mileage and Expense Claim
- Evaluations

Member On-Site Orientation Checklist

A thorough on-site orientation is crucial for setting the tone of the member's service year. It can assist the supervisor in more accurately assessing the training needs of the new member in order to increase their skills, competence, and expertise. At the end of the on-site orientation, members should have a basic knowledge or understanding of the following:

- Background, purpose, and structure of the sponsoring organization.
- Background of community and identification of important community leaders.
- Nature of the population served by the ECO AmeriCorps program.
- Potential Resources that can be applied to achieve project goals.
- Specific member assignments and skills needed to accomplish tasks.
- Specific goals and purpose of the member position at his/her service site.

Checklist – Please initial each item once completed.
Sign at the bottom when all items have been addressed and return the form to ECO AmeriCorps.

____ Review the member's position description and strategize an initial service plan using the SMART goals template. Set up the member for successful completion of first tasks with deadlines, including an order of priorities.
____ Go over expectations and protocols around punctuality, calling in late, breaks, personnel policies, drug-free workplace review the member's position description and strategize an initial service plan. Set up the member for successful completion of first tasks with deadlines, including an order of priorities.
____ Ensure that the member has all necessary safety training and/or gear.
____ Review any critical information with members like emergency prevention and response policies & procedures, mandated reporting requirements, confidentiality practices, etc.
____ Set up a regular check-in time for planning and feedback.
____ Set up a system for regular review of time sheets.
____ Review office procedures for mileage reimbursement, using supplies, etc.
____ Provide reading materials about the mission/vision, goals and objectives of the nonprofit where the member will be serving (annual reports/brochures, etc.)
____ Introduce the member to all staff, their role/position, as well as how the member might interface with them. Please also provide information on their phone extensions, email addresses, etc.
____ Give a tour of the site, including common areas, first-aid supplies, copy machine, fax machine, as well as the member's desk, computer, phone, etc., supplying directions for the use of all equipment.
____ Review the quarterly reporting information together and set up a system for tracking the needed information, including orienting them to any systems that already exist for doing so.
____ Make sure that any reasonable special accommodations needed are supplies. (Do not compel members to disclose health or other conditions to you, that must be a voluntary decision and action on their part.)
____ Share any other information about the community or assignment/project that is relevant.
Additional activities may include sending out PSAs to local newspapers introducing the member to the community, and/or including a letter of introduction in your organization's newsletter or on its website.

_____ _____
Member signature Date

_____ _____
Supervisor signature Date

Timesheets

To document your service hours and to receive your bi-weekly stipend check, you must submit a completed **ECO AmeriCorps Timesheet every other week**. Your service hour weeks will start on **Sunday** and the "Week Ending" date is **Saturday**. The timesheet should be submitted on the final day of service in a two-week period (normally on Friday unless the member is serving on a weekend day) to your site supervisor for approval. It must be submitted no later than the Monday following the end of the time reporting period.

If you do not fill out and submit your Timesheet on a biweekly basis with the required information and/or fall behind on your hours, you put the continued funding for the ECO AmeriCorps in jeopardy. The timesheet is the primary source of documentation for ECO AmeriCorps to determine whether or not the member has been actively serving and what activities the member has been performing. *If you fail to submit timesheets for two weeks or longer, you will be placed in suspension until the approved timesheets have been submitted to ECO AmeriCorps in full.

Daily Description of Activities

Each day must contain specific information including, but not limited to, the following:

- Describe your service, including all **allowable** activity(ies) occurred and any Community Partners involved in the activity.
- Identify the number of hours that can be attributed to activity type (training, direct service, fundraising).
- Please record hours to the nearest quarter hour.
- Up until the program has received your criminal history results: **You must be supervised at all times while serving vulnerable populations.**
    - Do not use the word "work" or any variation of the word "work" to describe your service.
    - For any and all acronyms used in your daily descriptions, identify what those acronyms represent in the "comments" section at the bottom of the time report.
    - If your service site allows you to telework or serve from home/an alternate location, do not identify the location of your service activities in your activity description.
    - On weekdays that you do not serve, enter "did not serve" in the description section. Do not leave the section blank, and do not describe your non service-related activities.

Travel time up to 3 hours each way (to and from) statewide and may be counted as hours. If traveling for a training opportunity, log the travel time as training hours. If traveling for as part of your direct service, log the time as direct service. Regular commuting time to and from the work site may not be counted. Driving time from your office to another work site may be counted. Lunch should not be counted, although short breaks of 15 minutes or less may be. If you eat lunch at your desk while you're working, by all means count it.

As a full time member, you should be scheduled to serve approximately 40 hours per week, and averaging at least 35.5 hours/week to successfully complete your term of service by the last day. Holiday, sick or personal time you choose to take is not counted on timesheets – only actual hours served are logged. If you are over or under that average by more than 20 hours, the Program Director will work with you to modify your schedule to get back on track. You will not receive your education award unless you successfully complete at least 1,700 hours during

your service (see exceptions in Member Agreement). **A member may not take longer than 12 months to complete his/her hours under any circumstances.**

Filling Out the Electronic Timesheet on OnCorps:

You can view a tutorial at: https://secure.oncorpsreports.com/media/MemberTimesheetTutorial.html

1. Go to www.vt.oncorpsreports.com. (It would be a good idea to bookmark this page)
2. Select the appropriate program year: **2018-2019**
3. Select "AmeriCorps Member" under ECO AmeriCorps
4. Enter your username and password and log in
5. Scroll over "Time Tracking" in the blue bar, then click on "Enter Timesheets"
6. Select the appropriate time period and click "choose"
7. If you are assigned more than one supervisor, select a supervisor from the drop-down menu at the top of the timesheet
8. Fill out the timesheet:
    - *a.* Enter the number of service, training and/or fundraising hours served for each day under the corresponding heading. Hours can only be entered in quarter hour increments (numbers ending in .00, .25, .50, and .75)
    - *b.* For each day that you claim hours, fill in a description of your activities/service
    - c. To save your hours so you can come back and edit the timesheet later, click the *Save* button. When you have entered all of you hours into the timesheet, click the *Authorize and Submit* button to send the timesheet to your supervisor for approval. After you click the *Authorize and Submit* button, a pop-up window will appear asking you to confirm that you want to submit your timesheet. In the pop-up window, click *OK* to send the timesheet to your supervisors or click *Cancel* to abort and return to editing your timesheet.
9. Once you submit the timesheet, an e-mail is sent to all of the supervisors selected by the member that they have a timesheet ready for approval.

Members are the only ones allowed to enter hours in OnCorps. Once submitted, the timesheet is locked and members can no longer revise it.

The supervisor logs in to OnCorps Reports and reviews the member's timesheet. The supervisor can either approve the timesheet in which case it is sent on to Reuben; or send the timesheet back to the member for revision. Dustin will then review the timesheet and accept it, or send it back to the member with the reason for the need for revision.

Things to Remember:

- Enter hours in increments of quarter hours (.00, .25, .50, and .75)
- Don't forget to include an activity description.
- Do not use the word "work" or any variation of the word "work" to describe your service.
- For any and all acronyms used in your daily descriptions, identify what those acronyms represent in the "comments" section at the bottom of the time report.
- If your service site allows you to telework or serve from home/an alternate location, do not identify the location of your service activities in your activity description.
- Write "did not serve" for any weekdays that you do not enter hours.

- The time sheet should be submitted no later than the Monday following the completion of the time reporting period.
- While living allowances are granted every two weeks, mileage reimbursements are provided just once per month in the last payment of the month.
- Contact Dustin with any questions or concerns.
- Include information regarding supervision if background check results are yet to be received and you need to have a supervisor present when interacting with vulnerable communities.

Mileage and Expense Reimbursement

The current GSA mileage reimbursement rate as of August 29, 2018, is $0.54.5 per mile. This is subject to change at any time. If the rate changes, Program Staff will notify you when this occurs. The form is saved on the Google Drive. Your team leader will also provide paper forms if needed.

Sample Reimbursement Form

State of Vermont Personal Expense Claim

AAF6A (11/95)

Name	Position	Dept/Board or Commission
Fred Flinstone	ECO AmeriCorps Member	DEC

Address
30 Cobblestone Way, Bedrock, VT 05555

Date	Explanation	Travel Address	Travel Miles	Travel Amount	Other Expenses	Total
5/6/16	Driving to/from Training	30 Cobblestone Way, Bedrock Vt 05555 449 Saxtons River Rd, Bellows Falls, VT 05101	280	$ 0.54	NA	$ 151.20
				$ -		$ -
				$ -		$ -
				$ -		$ -
				$ -		$ -
				$ -		$ -
				$ -		$ -
Totals			280	1	0	$ 151.20

***Note: All mileage reports must be submitted within 30 days of travel.**

***Compensation is $0.54 per mile**

Signature

CODING:
Dept ID: _____
Fund: _____
Program: _____
Project ID: _____

ECO AmeriCorps Member Mid-Term Performance Review

Review of Goals for this Evaluation

- Encourage clear and open discussion between members and supervisors.
- Provide the member clear feedback about her/his performance--clarifying standards and expectations
- Set individual and organizational goals for the member for the remainder of the program
- Discuss resources, supervisor assistance and training needed to reach these goals/objectives and assist the member's development
- Provide the opportunity for the member and the supervisor to maximize the impacts of the members service and increase their collaborative potential

Instructions: The ECO AmeriCorps member shall evaluate his/her performance in each category, write comments in the area given, select a rating for each category, and give the completed self-evaluation to her/his supervisor when finished. The supervisor shall then evaluate the member's performance, provide written feedback, and select a rating for each category. The member and supervisor shall then meet and review each other's assessments, reflect on successes, and identify strategies for areas in need of improvement. The "comments" field in each section should be used to record methods that the member and supervisor have agreed upon to address challenges and improve performance. For members with more than one site supervisor, each supervisor should be consulted with feedback provided by the main supervisor. The main supervisor shall meet with the member and sign the evaluation.

Once it is complete, both the member and the supervisor shall sign and date the evaluation. The member shall receive a copy, the site supervisor shall receive a copy, and an electronic copy shall be provided to ECO AmeriCorps by the date identified below.

ECO AmeriCorps Member: Click here to enter text.

Site Supervisor: Click here to enter text.

Service Site Location: Click here to enter text.

Please complete by March 1, 2019.

QUALITY OF SERVICE-RELATED PERFORMANCE

(Accuracy, timeliness, organization, thoroughness, attention to detail, results, care taken, etc. Understands and promotes the mission of service location and ECO AmeriCorps.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: Click here to enter text.

QUANTITY OF SERVICE-RELATED PERFORMANCE

(Productivity, pace, results, willingness to take on additional responsibility, personal understanding of boundaries and limits, etc. Sets clear and meaningful goals and priorities to guide service.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: Click here to enter text.

COMMUNICATION & MOTIVATION

(Relationships with colleagues and partners, communication, interpersonal skills, maturity, cooperation, positivity, helpfulness, teamwork, attitude towards service, supervisor, agency, colleagues, etc. Seeks out feedback and is open to new ideas. Meets with supervisor regularly. Keeps site supervisor and program staff well-informed of accomplishments and challenges. Recognizes and respects other perspectives. Respects supervisor's direction and decisions.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: **Click here to enter text.**

DEPENDABILITY

(Attendance, punctuality, reliability, follow through, responsibility sharing, etc. Is flexible and adaptive to changing needs and situations as they arise. Maintains accurate records of service and accomplishments. Completes forms and reports in a timely fashion. Maintains a professional appearance and represents service site and ECO AmeriCorps well.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: **Click here to enter text.**

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: **Click here to enter text.**

PROBLEM SOLVING

(Contributes ideas for improvement, displays a willingness & ability to learn, recognizes and identifies problems, employs positive approach to problem solving, shows innovation, possesses ability to complete tasks independently, demonstrates initiative, etc.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: **Click here to enter text.**

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: **Click here to enter text.**

TECHNICAL UNDERSTANDING

(Performs within position description, possesses skills to accomplish tasks, has project knowledge and understanding, understands and adheres to service site and program procedures, learns quickly, follows instructions, understands and successfully completes assigned tasks, etc.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: Click here to enter text.

ACHIEVEMENT of GOALS

(This is a good time to review the member's original goal sheet, and for the supervisor to have input as to how those goals interface with the sponsoring agency's goals. What were the member's major achievements during the first half of the program? Describe obstacles preventing goals from being met and identify ways to overcome them.)

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: Click here to enter text.

OVERALL RATING and GENERAL COMMENTS

Member self evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Member comments: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor evaluation
☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Supervisor comments: Click here to enter text.

SETTING GOALS and ACTION PLAN for IMPROVEMENT

List goals to achieve by the next performance review. These include specific achievements or outcomes, steps toward improving in certain areas, standards of success or ways to judge whether these goals have been obtained, etc.

Member and supervisor together: Click here to enter text.

This evaluation was discussed between the supervisor and member on Click here to enter a date.

Site Supervisor Name: Click here to enter text.

Site Supervisor Signature:

_____

This evaluation has been discussed with me and I have received a copy.

ECO AmeriCorps Member Name: Click here to enter text.

ECO AmeriCorps Member Signature:

_____

DO NOT SUBMIT WITHOUT SIGNATURES FROM BOTH MEMBER AND SUPERVISOR

ECO AmeriCorps Member Service Year Performance Review

Goals for this Evaluation

- Encourage clear and open discussion between members and supervisors.
- Provide the member with clear feedback about her/his performance
- Clearly identify member strengths and challenges to encourage his/her continued professional growth and success.

Instructions: The site supervisor shall evaluate the ECO AmeriCorps member's performance. This includes selecting a performance rating for each category and providing written feedback in the "comments" section for each category. For members with more than one site supervisor, each supervisor should be consulted with feedback provided by the main supervisor. Site supervisors shall schedule a performance review meeting with the ECO AmeriCorps member to review the evaluation, and provide constructive feedback to the member.

Once the performance review meeting is complete, both the member and the supervisor shall sign and date the evaluation. The member shall receive the original signed copy, the site supervisor shall receive a copy, and an electronic copy shall be provided to ECO AmeriCorps prior to the member's last date of service.

ECO AmeriCorps Member: Click here to enter text.

Site Supervisor: Click here to enter text.

Service Site Location: Click here to enter text.

Complete and return to ECO AmeriCorps Program Staff prior to end of service.

QUALITY OF SERVICE-RELATED PERFORMANCE

(Accuracy, timeliness, organization, thoroughness, attention to detail, results, care taken, etc. Understands and promotes the mission of service location and ECO AmeriCorps.)

☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Comments: Click here to enter text.

QUANTITY OF SERVICE-RELATED PERFORMANCE

(Productivity, pace, results, willingness to take on additional responsibility, personal understanding of boundaries and limits, etc. Sets clear and meaningful goals and priorities to guide service.)

☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Comments: Click here to enter text.

COMMUNICATION & MOTIVATION

(Relationships with colleagues and partners, communication, interpersonal skills, maturity, cooperation, positivity, helpfulness, teamwork. Attitude towards service, supervisor, agency, colleagues, etc. Seeks out feedback and is open to new ideas. Meets with supervisor regularly. Keeps site supervisor and program staff well-informed of accomplishments and challenges. Recognizes and respects other perspectives. Respects supervisor's direction and decisions.)

☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Comments: Click here to enter text.

DEPENDABILITY

(Attendance, punctuality, reliability, follow through, responsibility sharing, etc. Is flexible and adaptive to changing needs and situations as they arise. Maintains accurate records of service and accomplishments. Completes forms and reports in a timely fashion. Maintains a professional appearance and represents service site and ECO AmeriCorps well.)

☐Unacceptable ☐Needs Improvement ☐Satisfactory ☐Excellent ☐Outstanding

Comments: Click here to enter text.

PROBLEM SOLVING

(Contributes ideas for improvement, displays a willingness & ability to learn, recognizes and identifies problems, employs positive approach to problem solving, shows innovation, possesses ability to complete tasks independently, demonstrates initiative, etc.)

☐**Unacceptable** ☐**Needs Improvement** ☐**Satisfactory** ☐**Excellent** ☐**Outstanding**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

TECHNICAL UNDERSTANDING

(Performs within position description, possesses skills to accomplish tasks, has project knowledge and understanding, understands and adheres to service site and program procedures, learns quickly, follows instructions, understands and successfully completes assigned tasks, etc.)

☐**Unacceptable** ☐**Needs Improvement** ☐**Satisfactory** ☐**Excellent** ☐**Outstanding**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

ACHIEVEMENT of GOALS

(What were the member's major achievements during the service year? Did these achievements coincide with service site and ECO AmeriCorps goals? Identify obstacles preventing goals from being met.)

☐**Unacceptable** ☐**Needs Improvement** ☐**Satisfactory** ☐**Excellent** ☐**Outstanding**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

OVERALL RATING and GENERAL COMMENTS

(Rate the member's overall performance during his/her term of service.)

☐**Unacceptable** ☐**Needs Improvement** ☐**Satisfactory** ☐**Excellent** ☐**Outstanding**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

This evaluation was discussed between the supervisor and member on:

Date: _____

Site Supervisor Signature:

_____

This evaluation has been discussed with me and I have received a copy.

ECO AmeriCorps Member Signature:

_____

DO NOT SUBMIT WITHOUT SIGNATURES FROM BOTH MEMBER AND SUPERVISOR

VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Activity Reporting

Section 5

Quarterly Progress Reports

Accurate progress reporting is critical to the success of ECO AmeriCorps. It is with the progress reports you provide to us that we compile the data for our programmatic reports to SerVermont. Do not wait until the report is due to begin compiling data. You should be tracking your accomplishments and updating your quarterly reports each week to ensure that the information is accurate and complete.

Our formal reporting measures cover four areas. See **Section 2** for more information on performance measures.

2018-2019 Reporting Deadlines

December 14th: **1st Activity Report (Start date – Dec. 7)**

March 8th: **2nd Activity Report (Dec. 10 – March 1)**

May 31st: **3rd Activity Report (March 4 – May 24)**

August 9th: **Final Activity Report (May 27 – End of service)**

Sample Quarterly Report

Quarterly Report
Vermont ECO
AmeriCorps
Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Email completed report to Dustin.bowman@vermont.gov
Also include **ALL** necessary supporting documentation and project accomplishment forms

Host Site:	**Supervisor:**	**Member:**

First Quarter	September10, 2018 – December 7,2018 / **Due: December 14th**
Second Quarter	December 10, 2018 – March 1,2019 / **Due: March 8th**
Third Quarter	March 4, 2019 – May 24, 2019 / **Due May 31st**
Fourth Quarter	May 27,2019 – August 9, 2019 / **Due: August 9th**

Documents included with this report

☐ List of Volunteers
☐ Volunteer Time Logs
☐ Volunteer or Participant Surveys
☐ Project Accomplishment Forms
☐ Photos and Descriptions
☐ PR Materials (Press Releases; Articles, Blogs, Newsletters, etc.)
☐ Flyers or Posters
☐ Grant Award Letters
☐ Certifications Earned
☐ Other. List here:

NOTE: *This form should include comprehensive, "at a glance" totals from information included in attached project accomplishment forms. Full descriptions of projects and accomplishments should be included in attachments.*

Professional Development*

This section should only include non-ECO AmeriCorps hosted training within the quarter listed. Attach any certificates received.

Title of Training/Conference	Skills Developed / Certifications Earned

Projects Implemented*

This section should include projects you started, continued, or finished a project during this quarter. This includes treatments/improvements to a landscape; including rivers, trails, public land, farmland, parks, etc. Otherwise list N/A.

Project Title	Intended Effect (Limit to one sentence)	Began/Continued/Finished?

Community Training Provided*

This section should include educational programming you provided to community members this quarter. Otherwise list N/A.

Program Title	Number of Participants	# Participants Indicating Change or Intention to Change

Community Volunteers Supported*

This section only needs to be addressed if you recruited/hosted/trained/supported volunteers this quarter. Otherwise list N/A.

Project Title	# First-Time Volunteers	# Recurring Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hours Served

Partnerships Developed

List any association with community stakeholders, other AmeriCorps members, any other people/organizations outside of your host site that you collaborated with.

Name/Organization	Project/Event	Organization Contact

Other Accomplishments

Please list any additional accomplishments not directly related to meeting your objectives (e.g. applying for grant, attending/participating in community events, publications, press releases, op-ed blogs, etc.).

Great Stories

Describe **at least one** success story – an experience this quarter that shows how AmeriCorps members "Get Things Done" (e.g. something you are proud of, a story to tell your grandkids). *Attach another sheet if necessary.*

Challenges

Please describe any challenges encountered. For example, resolved or unresolved problems, obstacles to achieving program objectives, significant sources of delay, program elements not meeting expectations, and/or events or incidents that caused concern. Note steps being taken to address issues and/or note if they have been resolved. Please include any progress from challenges mentioned in previous quarterly reports.

Challenge Encountered	Steps Being Taken / Report on Progress

***Information reported on this document must match figures from accompanying project accomplishment forms.**

Member Signature: _____ **Date:** _____ / _____ / _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____ / _____ / _____

By signing above, member and supervisor attest that reported accomplishments are accurate and appropriate records have been maintained per CNCS reporting guidance.

DO NOT SUBMIT WITHOUT BOTH SIGNATURES

Service Project Accomplishment Form

Member Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Title of Project: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date project was started: Click or tap to enter a date.

Date project was completed: Click or tap to enter a date.

Who/What does this project benefit: Click or tap here to enter text.

Project created for: Choose an item.

Please describe if needed: Click or tap here to enter text.

Miles of trails/river treated and/or constructed: Click or tap here to enter text.

Miles of trails/river improved and/or put into use: Click or tap here to enter text.

Acres of parks or public land improved: Click or tap here to enter text.

Acres of parks or public land treated: Click or tap here to enter text.

First-time volunteers recruited/supervised: Click or tap here to enter text.

Recurring volunteers recruited/supervised: Click or tap here to enter text.

Volunteer hours served: Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the project (what was created; how does it work, Etc.): Click or tap here to enter text.

Explain how you tracked/recorded each accomplishment: Click or tap here to enter text.

Explain how you tracked/recorded volunteers & volunteer hours: Click or tap here to enter text.

Personal reflection on project:
What went well, what didn't, what would you do differently next time, what was done to ensure sustainability (e.g. long lasting effects, future upkeep needed)??
Click or tap here to enter text.

Publications associated with this project (include link to website or send in separate attachment)
If including in separate attachment, please include attachment's name in box below
Click or tap here to enter text.

Pictures of the project (minimum of two pictures required)
Please include a description of the photo beneath the insert. Before and after photos are encouraged.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Community Education/Programming Project Accomplishment Form

Member Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Title of program: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of programming event: Click or tap to enter a date.

End date of programming event: Click or tap to enter a date.

Number of participants: Click or tap here to enter text.

How was number of participants recorded: Click or tap here to enter text.

Number of participants reporting a change in behavior or intention to change: Click or tap here to enter text.

How was participant behavior change/intention to change behavior recorded: Click or tap here to enter text.

Number of first-time participants: Click or tap here to enter text.

How was number of first-time participants recorded: Click or tap here to enter text.

Number of recurring participants: Click or tap here to enter text.

How was number of recurring participants recorded: Click or tap here to enter text.

Explain how this program was promoted: Click or tap here to enter text.

Project created for: Choose an item.

If other, explain here: Click or tap here to enter text.

What skills were taught (be specific): Click or tap here to enter text.

Personal reflection of event
What went well, what didn't, what would you do differently next time, what was done to ensure sustainability (e.g. long lasting effects, future upkeep needed)??

Click or tap here to enter text.

Publications associated with this project (include link or send in separate attachment):
If including in separate attachment, please include attachment's name in box below

Click or tap here to enter text.

Pictures of the project (minimum of two pictures required)
Please include a description of the photo beneath the insert.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Professional Development Project Accomplishment Form

Member Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Title of Training/Conference attended: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Organization facilitating training/conference: Click or tap here to enter text.

Location of training/conference: Click or tap here to enter text.

Is this a one-time or recurring training/conference? If recurring, please explain:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Cost of attendance: Click or tap here to enter text.

Who paid training/conference fee? You, host site, ECO AmeriCorps:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Did you receive a professional certification? If yes, please provide name of certificate below and provide copy of certificate with report:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the training/conference (what information was presented, what did you learn, who else attended?)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Personal reflection:
What went well, what didn't, would you recommend to others? Why?
Click or tap here to enter text.

Publications associated with this event (include link to website or send in separate attachment)
If including in separate attachment, please include attachment's name in box below
Click or tap here to enter text.

Pictures of your participation in the event (not required, but strongly encouraged)
Please include a description of the photo beneath the insert. Before and after photos are encouraged.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ECO AmeriCorps

Member Name: _____

Date:_____

ECO AmeriCorps
Volunteer Intake Form

NAME: _____ _____ **PROJECT:** _____
(LAST) (FIRST)

HOME ADDRESS: _____

(STREET) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT): _____

(STREET) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

PHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

RETURNING VOLUNTEER? **YES / NO** **Hours Served:** _____

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT OPPORTUNITY? INTERNET, FLYER, REFERRED BY FRIEND (PLEASE INCLUDE NAME)?

_____

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

NAME: _____ **PHONE:** _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____ **ALT PHONE:** _____

Please check any of the following categories that apply to you. This information is collected for reporting purposes.

☐ **I am currently enrolled in college** ☐ **I was born between 1946-1964**

ECO AmeriCorps use only:

WHAT DID VOLUNTEER(S) ACCOMPLISH INCLUDING SKILLS LEARNED AND APPLIED? (IF MULTIPLE VOLUNTEERS FOR ONE PROJECT, JUST FILL OUT ONE SHEET DESCRIPTION)

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ECO AmeriCorps

Member Name: _____

Date: _____

ECO AmeriCorps
Volunteer/Participant Exit Form

NAME: _____ _____ **PROJECT:**_____
(LAST) (FIRST)

HAVE YOU VOLUNTEERED WITH THIS ORGANIZATION BEFORE? IF SO, WHEN:

_____

HOW DID YOU FIND THIS OPPORTUINTY?

INTERNET SEARCH/ PUBLICATION / FACEBOOK / POSTER / REFERRED BY FRIEND / LISTSERVE (E.G. GOOGLE GROUP MESSAGE) / OTHER

EXPLAIN IF NECESSARY:

_____

HAS THIS EXPERIENCE MADE YOU MORE AWARE OF YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND/OR MOTIVATED YOU TO CHANGE BEHAVIORS THAT IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT? IF SO, PLEASE EXPLAIN:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE TODAY:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EXPLAIN:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

MEMBER USE ONLY

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Demographic Information

Number of episodic volunteers generated: _____

Number of ongoing volunteers generated: _____

Leveraged volunteers - # of volunteers recruited, coordinated, or supported by your programs: _____

Disadvantaged children and youth - # serving as leveraged volunteers: _____

College students - # of leveraged volunteers enrolled in a degree-seeking program: _____

Baby Boomers - # of individuals born between 1946 and 1964 who serve as volunteers: _____

AmeriCorps members - # certified in disaster preparedness and response: _____

AmeriCorps members - # available for deployment in support of any disaster: _____

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ECO AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

Member Resources

Section 6

Benefits and Economic Resources Directory

Below is a list of benefits available in Vermont. You will need to meet eligibility requirements. Some of these have deadlines for application (e.g., fuel assistance). If you have questions about these services, please contact the administering agency. We are available to provide documentation that may be needed for these services.

Member Assistance Program

As an ECO AmeriCorps Member, you have access to a Member Assistance Program (MAP) through **All One Health**. The MAP offers free and confidential short-term counseling sessions and other benefits such as referrals to attorneys or financial counselors. Issues that MAPs commonly assist with include grief and loss, substance abuse, workplace issues, relationship problems, legal issues, financial problems, and more.

To find out more or to access this ***free and confidential*** service call **800.451.1834** or visit their website www.allonehealth.com. The password to access services is: **ASC.**

Housing

Affordable Housing

The Vermont State Housing Authority provides help with safe, affordable housing. The AmeriCorps living allowance should NOT be counted as income for Section 8 eligibility. See the website at **http://www.vsha.org**

There are regional housing authorities that can provide help with affordable housing- some have a wait-list, so check how long the average wait is with each subsidized housing development. See the following website for a list of local housing authorities
http://www.affordablehousingonline.com/housingauthority.asp?State=VT

Renting In Vermont: On-line help in finding an apartment:
In and around Brattleboro: **Reformer.com**
In and around Burlington: **BurlingtonFreePress.com**, **SevendaysVT.com**, **Burlington.CraigsList.org**
In and around Montpelier: **TimesArgus.com, SevendaysVT.com**, **www.vt-world.com**
In and around Morrisville: **NewsandCitizen.com**
In and around Rutland: **RutlandHerald.com**
In and around St. Albans: **samessenger.com**

On-line information about rights as a renter in Vermont: Vermont Tenants, Inc. at
http://www.cvoeo.org/

Weatherization Program

Vermont's Weatherization Program is designed to help low income residents to save fuel and money by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. If a household includes a member who receives Food Stamps or Home Energy Assistance, the household is considered automatically eligible for

weatherization services. Renters qualify for services if they meet the income eligibility guidelines. For more information visit the website at **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/weatherization**.

Low Income Heating Assistance Program (Fuel Assistance)

There is a needs-based program in Vermont to help people with heating costs. There are deadlines for applying. Sometimes the program runs out of funds, so meeting the deadlines is important**. The best time to apply is between July 15 through August 31,** however applications are often accepted outside this time period**.** More information is available on-line at **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel-assistance**.

Food

3SquaresVT (formerly called Food Stamps)

Many members apply for food stamps to supplement the limited living allowance. When you apply for food stamps, your living allowance should **NOT** be counted as income. You can download an application or request that an application be sent to you at **http://www.vermontfoodhelp.com/**. On this website, you can find hours of operation and download a map and directions to your local office.

Also see this website: **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT**

After you submit an application, you should receive a letter within 10 days from the office informing you of the date and time of your interview. If you are unable to attend the scheduled interview, notify the food stamp office as soon as you are able.

Community Supported Agriculture

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-VT offers half price Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares to low-income people. Through CSA, participants get fresh, organic produce from a local farms every week. To apply, you need to fill out an application on NOFA's website -- **http://www.nofavt.org/programs/farm-share** The application is near the bottom of the page. Not all farms participate, but you can contact a farm to ask if it does, or NOFA will help to find one closest to you that participates in the program.

Farms to Families

Farm To Family coupons help you buy locally-grown fresh vegetables and fruits. They can be used at about 50 participating farmers' markets throughout Vermont. About one in four Vermonters qualifies for Farm To Family coupons. For more information visit the website at **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/f2f** .

Health Care and Child Care

Health Care Plan

The State of Vermont has health coverage (VHAP, Catamount Health and others) for those who are not otherwise covered and who qualify. You may want to check out this coverage. If you are interested, you will need to set this up BEFORE you begin service. You can find information at https://portal.healthconnect.vermont.gov/VTHBELand/welcome.action.

Dental Care

Members may qualify for low-cost dental services at the following facilities:

Organization	Website
Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic	http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com/
Community Health Centers of Burlington	http://www.chcb.org/services-programs/dental-care
Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region	http://www.chcrr.org/live/locations/2012-07-10-18-57-19/chcrr-dental-menu
Rutland Free Clinic	http://www.vtccu.org/rutland-free-clinic.html
Good Neighbor Clinic, White River Junction	http://www.goodneighborhealthclinic.org/
Vermont Tech Dental Hygiene Clinic, Williston	https://www.vtc.edu/dental-hygiene-clinic

Child Care Subsidy

Members may be eligible to receive help with the cost of their child care. The child care subsidy is a payment that assists eligible Vermont families with the cost of child care. The subsidy is available to parents who meet eligibility criteria to help cover the fee for eligible child care. The child care subsidy is paid directly to the child care provider. For more information see the website at http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ccfap.

Entertainment and Recreation

Recreation

Valley Quest Valley Quest is an award-winning, place-based education program that uses treasure hunts to celebrate community, natural, history, cultural sites, stories and special places.
Valley Quest is a fun way to learn about our special places in the Upper Valley, whether you are looking for a treasure box or creating the adventure for others.
http://www.vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/

Discounted YMCA Membership

Members qualify for a discounted membership (~$15 per month) while enrolled in AmeriCorps. YMCA may ask you for documentation of enrollment, of which you can request from VHCB AC.

See the following websites for lists of activities in Vermont:
State of Vermont website at http://www.vermont.gov/portal/travel/
Vermont Department of Forests and Parks website at http://fpr.vermont.gov/
List of events from Visit Vermont https://vermontvacation.com/plan-your-visit/events

Other Resources

Community Action Agencies

To find out about services in your community, contact the office near you. A list of offices is at http://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/caps

Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

Individual Development Account (IDA) is a matched-savings program that helps income-eligible Vermonters to save money to buy a home, pursue higher education, or capitalize a small business. For more information visit the website at **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/IDA** .

Lifeline (Telephone)

There is a needs-based program in Vermont to help partially cover the cost of a land-line or cellular phone. More information is available on-line at **http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/phone**.

Free Tax Preparation Assistance

Community Action Agencies throughout the state offer free, basic tax preparation to Vermont households earning less than $49,000 a year.

If you are eligible, a trained volunteer can help prepare your taxes and tell you about tax credits that may help you keep more of your income. These include:

- Earned Income Credit (*the IRS estimates that 25% of taxpayers who qualify for this credit do not claim it*);
- Child and Dependent Care Credit;
- Retirement Savings Contribution;
- Education Credit;
- Vermont property tax adjustment; and
- Making Work Pay Credit.

To find the Community Action Agency in your area, dial 2-1-1 and ask for your local tax site. This free service begins at the end of January and runs through April.

Transportation

Bike Recycle Vermont provides affordable bikes to low-income Vermonters **http://bikerecyclevermont.org/** .

Car Share Vermont is a car sharing nonprofit with vehicles in Burlington and Montpelier **http://www.carsharevt.org/**

Local Bus Service

Agencies	Counties Served	Website
Green Mountain Transit Agency	Washington, Lamoille, Mad River Valley, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Connections to Chittenden and Caledonia counties.	http://gmtaride.org/
Chittenden County Transit Authority	Chittenden: Burlington, Essex, South Burlington, Shelburne, Williston, Winooski, Milton, Hinesburg, and a portion of Colchester. LINK Express routes serve Montpelier, Middlebury, and St. Albans commuters.	http://cctaride.org/
Rural Community Transportation Inc.	Essex, Caledonia, Orleans and Lamoille	http://www.riderct.org/
The Bus	Rutland	http://www.thebus.com/

Career Planning and Education Award

Professional Development

AmeriCorps Alums connects AmeriCorps alumni to resources, fellow alums, job prospects, trainings and more. Sign up at **http://www.americorpsalums.org/**

Vermont Young Professionals VYP seeks to help professionals of all ages connect with their communities. Learn more at **http://www.vyp.org/**

Common Good Vermont offers extensive resources to those in the nonprofit community. Check out their training opportunities , job listings, and more at **http://commongoodvt.org/** .

Three financial aid resources for people in public service

If you are in a public service career and carrying—or considering—student debt, here are three resources to help you navigate your repayment options:

1. AskHeatherJarvis.com

Heather Jarvis is a national expert on public service loan forgiveness who contributed to student debt relief policy for the House Education Committee and others in Congress. Her new site is a clearinghouse of information about managing your debt while working in a mission-based career. Features:

- Free, interactive webinars- **http://askheatherjarvis.com/webinars**

- Clear (clear, clear) FAQs and steps for accessing public service loan forgiveness- **http://askheatherjarvis.com/tools**
- A blog with topical news and timely advice - **http://askheatherjarvis.com/blog**
- A forum for you to connect with Heather and others who are paying attention- **http://askheatherjarvis.com/forums**

2. IBRinfo.org

IBRinfo is an independent information hub about income-based student loan repayment and public service loan forgiveness – two relatively new federal programs that help student borrowers afford an education. Features:

- Explanations of both programs passed as part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007- **http://www.ibrinfo.org/what.vp.html**
- Snapshot of who is eligible to participate in the programs- **http://www.ibrinfo.org/can.vp.html**
- Tips for accessing loan relief through the programs- **http://www.ibrinfo.org/how.vp.html**
- As-needed email alerts with news that counts. When an email appears in my inbox, less than monthly, I read it. It's always valuable information. If you don't believe me, you can also just read the email alerts on their site. **http://www.ibrinfo.org/updates.vp.html**

3. Education Award

http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/alumni/segal-americorps-education-award
For former AmeriCorps, VISTA, and NCCC members out there, check out the official CNCS website on the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. The Education Award—around $5,000—can be used to pay back student loans and/or to pay tuition at qualifying schools. Features:

- How to make the most of your Ed Award when you go to school and to pay back loans- **http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/alumni/segal-americorps-education-award/using-your-segal-education-award**
- Strategies for dealing with the extra taxable income (the Ed Award is fully taxable)- **http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/alumni/segal-americorps-education-award/tax-implications-education-award**
- Information on finding a school that will match your Ed Award **http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award/segal-americorps-education-award-matching**

If you're thinking about **financial aid for grad school**, consider these additional resources:

- Idealist Grad Fairs: Meet grad school representatives in cities across the United States and listen to panel discussion on admissions and financial aid- **http://www.idealist.org/info/GradFairs**.
- Grad School Resource Center: Advice about ways to pay for school- **http://www.idealist.org/info/GradEducation/Resources/Financing**

College Cost Reduction and Access Act

On September 27, 2007, President George W. Bush signed the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 ("CCRAA") into law. In addition to other amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, the CCRAA created two new federal programs: a new Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and a new Income-Based Repayment plan (IBR) for the repayment of federal loans.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program offers forgiveness for outstanding Federal Direct loans for those who make 120 qualifying payments after October 1, 2007, while working full-time in a "public service job" as defined in the Act. The new Income-Based Repayment plan helps to make repaying education loans more affordable for low-income borrowers, such as an AmeriCorps member living on a stipend. IBR became available in July 2009.

On October 23, 2008, the Department of Education published a final rule that details the implementation of the Act. It is important to note that the final rule recognizes full-time AmeriCorps service as equivalent to a public service job.

CNCS has developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions (PDF) based on the Department of Education's final rule. These FAQs are designed to answer a variety of basic questions that AmeriCorps members/alumni might have based upon their individual loan status. If you have additional questions on the impact of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and/or the Income-Based Repayment plan for AmeriCorps members or alumni, please send your questions to: AmeriCorpsloanforgiveness@cns.gov.

Additional Resources

- ECMC
- Equal Justice Works
- Federal Student Aid
- FinAid.org
- Income-Based Repayment Plan Info
- Student Loan Borrower Assistance
- U.S. Department of Education
- http://frontporchforum.com/

State of Vermont
Agency of Human Services
Office of the Secretary
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-0204
www.ahs.state.vt.us

[phone] 802-241-2220
[fax] 802-241-2979

Cynthia D. LaWare, Secretary

MAR 27 2006

March 15, 2006

Rebecca L. Zampieri, Program Officer
Vermont Commission of National and Community Service
Office of the Governor
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-4801

Re: Food Stamps for AmeriCorps Members

Dear Ms. Zampieri:

Thank you for your letter dated February 27, 2006 in which you shared concerns about discrepancies in how Economic Services Division (ESD) offices are counting living allowances received by AmeriCorps members when determining Food Stamp eligibility. I appreciate being informed of inconsistencies which may affect the level and accuracy of services provided to our customers. I assure you that the Agency and its staff are committed to providing all of our customers with the essential services they need.

I referred your letter to Reneé Richardson, ESD's Food and Nutrition Program Chief and asked her to review the federal guidance related to AmeriCorps living allowances (issued on April 23, 2001 by the United States Department of Agriculture) and corresponding Vermont guidance rules. Her analysis found that the most recent guidance issued by ESD, a Food Stamp Interpretive Memo dated July 17, 1997 that was based on federal guidance at the time, needs to be updated. Thus, ESD will take immediate steps to issue an update to the Interpretive Memo to clarify that – without exception – AmeriCorps living allowances are not counted as income for purposes of Food Stamp Program eligibility. ESD will send a copy of the memo to you when it is issued.

I am sorry to learn that an AmeriCorps member in St. Albans may have had food stamp benefits reduced due to the confusion about counting the AmeriCorps living allowance. We have referred this situation to Claire LaRose, ESD District Manager in St. Albans. The affected AmeriCorps member should contact Ms. LaRose at 802-527-5454 and ask to have her food stamp benefits recomputed with the AmeriCorps living allowance excluded.

VERMONT

Letter to Rebecca L. Zampieri
March 15, 2006
Page 2

If you have further questions about Food Stamp Program rules and countable income, please feel free to contact Reneé Richardson, Food and Nutrition Program Chief. She would be happy to meet with you in person or to speak with you by phone to answer your questions. Reneé can be reached directly by calling 802-241-2820, or by email at reneer@path.state.vt.us.

Again, thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Cynthia D. LaWare

Cynthia D. LaWare
Secretary, Agency of Human Services

cc: Reneé Richardson
Claire LaRose

INTERPRETIVE MEMO

[X] Food Stamp Rule Interpretation **[ ] Procedural Instruction**

This memo remains effective statewide until it is specifically superseded – either by a subsequent memo or by a contradictory rule with a later date.

Please file in your manual facing the page indicated below.

Facing page 273.9c **Effective date of this memo** 3/15/06 **Page** 1

This memo: **[ ] is new** **[X] Replaces one dated** 7/17/97

UPDATE: AmeriCorps Living Allowance Clarification

Without exception, AmeriCorps payments are excluded from income for food stamp purposes.

AmeriCorps programs come under Title 1 of the National and Community Service Act (NCSA) of 1990 as amended in 1999. The NCSA states that allowances, earnings, and payments to participants in AmeriCorps programs must not be considered as income for the purpose of determining eligibility for any federal or federally-assisted needs-based program, other than as provided under the Social Security Act.

This change will be implemented on a case-by-case basis at certification and recertification, or at any time that a worker learns that a food stamp participant is receiving AmeriCorps living allowance payments.

VERMONT

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation *Agency of Natural Resources*
ECO AmeriCorps Program
One National Life Drive, Main 2 [phone] 802-779-6054
Montpelier, VT 05620-3520

Sept. 5, 2018

Dear Benefits Manager,

[ECO Member] is a full-time member of the ECO AmeriCorps program through the State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). [ECO Member] will earn a gross living allowance of $16,500 for serving at least 1,700 service and training hours within an eleven-month period. This will happen between September 11th, 2018 and August 10th, 2019. The living allowance is distributed in biweekly checks of $687.50 gross every other week for the above contract period. Please note that this living allowance is taxable.

This is not considered a "wage", but a "living allowance", and may not be paid out on an hourly basis. AmeriCorps **members** are not considered "employees" or "volunteers". Their contract is for this 11-month period only. They also do not qualify for "overtime" pay as they do not fall under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Also, please note that AmeriCorps regulations specify that: "A member's living allowance does not affect his or her eligibility for federal need-based programs, such as Food Stamps, Section 8 housing, and public housing." Therefore, money that [ECO Member] receives through AmeriCorps should not be counted as "income" for any of these purposes.

If you have further questions about this, don't hesitate to call me at (802) 461-5222. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Dustin Bowman
ECO AmeriCorps Program Coordinator

VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ECO AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

Health Care

Section 7

Health Care

Health Care Options

All members serving in AmeriCorps must have health care coverage. ECO AmeriCorps has a health care plan for those without outside coverage.

The Corps Network

The ECO AmeriCorps Program provides member healthcare through The Corps Network.

- The Corps Network plan is provided by the program. The entire premium is covered by the program and there are no additional costs or withholding on behalf of the member.
- The plan only covers the member. Family members are not covered on the plan.
- There is a $175 deductible for the program year.
- The plan pays 80% of cost incurred when using in-network providers, and 60% when using out of network providers.
- Information on coverage is included in the following pages.

Medicaid

As an alternative to the Corps Network, members may be eligible for Medicaid through the state of Vermont Health Care Exchange. More information is included in the following pages.

Other Options

Members may also seek their own Health Care Coverage, access (if 24 years of age or under) parents or partners health care plan, or seek health care coverage elsewhere.

Coverage Required

All members MUST be covered by an ACA compliant health care plan while serving in AmeriCorps. Documentation must be submitted to the program to verify coverage if using a plan other than The Corps Network. If members are not able to provide documentation of coverage, they must enroll in The Corps Network plan.

Members may enroll in The Corps Network at any point in their service term. In order to enroll, members should request a health care enrollment form from Program Staff.

Open Enrollment Periods and Continuation of Coverage

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance that created a special healthcare enrollment period for AmeriCorps members.

Starting Service: If you started your AmeriCorps service after an open enrollment period ended, you have 60 days from your service start date to sign-up for healthcare coverage through the federal healthcare marketplace.

Ending Service: At the conclusion of your service, you are able to purchase a qualified health plan from the federal healthcare marketplace outside of the annual open enrollment period. You have 60 days from your service end date to sign-up for healthcare coverage. When you conclude your service, you will be able to purchase a qualified health plan immediately, rather than waiting until open enrollment season.

Open Enrollment periods do not apply to health care provided by the Program. Members may enroll in The Corps Network at any time during their service. At the conclusion of your service, members are not eligible for Continuation of Coverage through the Corps Network.

Corpsmember Health Care Insurance Plan

September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019

Medical Underwritten by Cigna

Medical Group Number: 3338030

	Cigna "Open Access Plus" Preferred Provider	Out-of-Network
Deductible	$175 per Plan Year*	
Out of Pocket Maximum	$2,750 *(including deductible)*	
Benefit Maximum	Unlimited	
Hospital	**Prior Authorization Required for All Inpatient Admissions**	
Room & Board	80%	60%
Other Hospital Services	80%	60%
Emergency Room	$100 co-pay per visit, deductible applies, then covered at 80%	
Professional Services		
Office	80%	60%
Urgent Care	$20 co-pay; deductible applies, then covered at 80%	$20 co-pay; deductible applies, then covered at 80%
Surgery	80%	60%
Diagnostic Lab & X-ray	80%	60%
Allergy Injections	80%	60%
Preventive Care		
Routine Care (including Preventive screenings)	100% (*deductible waived*)	60%
Mammogram/Pap Smear	100% *(deductible waived)*	60%
Outpatient Rehabilitation	**20 visits per Plan Year**	
(Includes Physical, Speech, Occupational, Cardiac Therapies and Chiropractic Care)	80%	60%
Mental Health		
Inpatient	80%	60%
Outpatient	80%	60%
Chemical Dependency		
Detoxification		
Inpatient	80%	60%
Outpatient	80%	60%
Ambulance	80%	80%
Prescription Drugs (including oral contraceptives)	**Prior Authorization Required for Some Prescriptions** Co-insurance is paid at the pharmacy	
	80%	60%
Durable Medical Equipment	80%	60%
AD&D (Gerber)	$10,000	
Rate (Per Corpsmember Per Month)	$304.25**	

All benefits are subject to deductible and coinsurance unless otherwise specified.

*** Plan Year means September 1st to August 31. Note: If you meet your deductible in June, July or August, that amount will carry forward to begin satisfying the deductible that resets on September 1st.**

****The health plan premium is paid in full for corpsmembers by their program.**

CIGNA requires prior authorization for all inpatient hospital admissions, some outpatient procedures and certain prescription drugs.

Eligibility Definitions

The Corps Network Health Plan is an insurance program with certain rules required in order to maintain cost efficiency and benefit levels. We rely on each member program to understand and adhere to the rules and standards that support the plan. Following are key definitions and some frequently asked questions regarding eligibility of corpsmembers:

Definitions

Eligible Person - An Active Corps Network Organizational Corpsmember or AmeriCorps Member contracted by a Corps Network Member Program to perform specific duties in service to the community. An Eligible Person may be a foreign national, but there is no coverage for any expenses incurred by an insured outside the United States, its territories and possessions.

Corps Network Organizational Corpsmember - a participant (AmeriCorps Member or Non-AmeriCorps Corpsmember) who is enrolled for a limited term of service (usually up to one year) with a Corps Network Organizational Member Corps to perform duties under the instruction and direction of that Corps.

AmeriCorps Member - a participant currently enrolled and active in AmeriCorps through an AmeriCorps program that is an Affiliate or Basic Member of The Corps Network or through an Affiliate State Commission Corps Network Member.

Eligibility FAQs — Medical

When does a corpsmember's coverage begin?

The plan is designed to allow coverage beginning on the corpsmember's first day of active service.

When does a corpsmember's coverage end?

A corpsmember's coverage ends on the last day of the month in which their active service terminates.

What happens to coverage during a medical suspension?

If a corpsmember's service is suspended for medical reasons, the plan may continue in place until the last day of the month after one month of suspension. Premium must be paid by the program without interruption. Ascension, the plan administrator, must be notified of any corpsmember that is covered during a medical suspension.

Is premium pro-rated?

If a member's start date occurs in the first 15 days of the month, premium is owed for the entire month. If this date falls in the last 15 days of the month, premium is not owed until the first of the following month. The initial payment will be for an entire month's premium.

A full month of premium is owed for the month in which a corpsmember's active service ends as coverage continues until the end of that month.

Can the corpsmember be charged for any portion of their premiums?

The Corps Network Health plan requires 100% premium contribution on the part of the program. Therefore, premium cannot be billed to the corpsmember. The program is responsible for the full cost of all its corpsmembers' coverage.

Do all corpsmembers need to be enrolled in the plan?

The plan requires 100% participation of all eligible corpsmembers. The only valid reason for an eligible member to waive benefits under The Corps Network Health Plan is if they have coverage from another source (e.g., spouse, parent). The corpsmember must provide documentation that he/she is covered elsewhere and complete a signed waiver form which is kept on file at the program.

This policy does not bar members from being enrolled on another policy (through another source) in addition to The Corps Network Health plan. The Corps Network plan will pay primary to most other insurance.

How do the eligibility rules work for dental/vision?

The program decides whether they want to purchase the dental/vision coverage for their corpsmembers. If the program enrolls in the dental/vision coverage for their corpsmembers, anyone enrolled in the medical must also be enrolled in the dental/vision and vice versa. Please reference the Program Enrollment Form for dental/vision insurance and the dental/vision FAQ for more details on the eligibility rules regarding the dental/vision benefits.

Can a corpsmember who waived coverage be enrolled on The Corps Network plan later?

If the waiving corpsmember loses other coverage, the program is required to enroll him/her onto The Corps Network Health Plan in order to comply with the participation rules.

Can a corpsmember cover any dependents under this policy?

No. The plan is designed to cover corpsmembers only.

What about COBRA/Continuation?

COBRA is Employer/Employee legislation. Corpsmembers are not considered employees and more aptly meet the definition of a volunteer. Therefore, COBRA will not be offered.

What if our program has members returning for a second year?

Your program may choose to allow "Gap" coverage for up to 2 months between one service term and the next when a corpsmember commits to a second term of service. If you require the returning member to pay for "Gap" coverage, you must collect the premium from them and remit to Ascension as part of the normal billing process.

What options are available to corpsmembers for health coverage when their active service ends and they are no longer eligible for The Corps Network plan?

Losing coverage through completion of AmeriCorps service triggers a special enrollment period. The member has 60 days from the date coverage ends to sign up for a plan through the federal healthcare marketplace or applicable state exchange.

A free resource available to exiting corpsmembers is the Service United Marketplace, an online exchange for buying individual policies. Follow this link for information on the Service United Marketplace or contact the Willis Towers Watson team.

Is The Corps Network Plan Compliant with the Affordable Care Act and does it provide Minimum Essential Coverage?

As of September 1, 2014 and thereafter, The Corps Network Plan is compliant with the Affordable Care Act (ACA). There are no caps on lifetime benefits or essential benefits. Therefore, it qualifies as Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) and satisfies the Individual Mandate of the ACA.

Can our program offer The Corps Network Plan and a Reimbursement Option for coverage through a state or federal marketplace plan?

No. In order to utilize The Corps Network Plan, a program must attest to the fact that there is no other program sponsored coverage. This includes reimbursement of the member's share of individual policy premiums on the marketplace. A program cannot offer both options to members.

Will Members covered under this policy be subject to the Shared Responsibility tax penalty of the ACA?

The Corps Network Plan qualifies as Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC), satisfying an individual's obligation under the ACA for the duration of coverage under The Corps Network Plan.

Will Programs be assisted by the plan in meeting the ACA reporting requirements?

Since AmeriCorps defines corpsmembers as volunteers, we believe that programs are not required to provide a 1095c to those covered by this plan. If you decide to provide this form to your covered members anyway, Ascension can assist with a report that reflects who was actually covered during the year, but of course, not all who were offered coverage. Form 1094c must be submitted to the IRS. This form will be submitted to the IRS by Cigna.

Does The Corps Network Plan satisfy our obligation as an AmeriCorps grantee?

According to the 2015 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants, a program may satisfy its requirement related to health insurance for full time members by purchasing a private policy. The policy must be considered Minimum Essential Coverage and meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act. The Corps Network Plan meets these standards and satisfies a program's obligation.

Who will answer any additional questions that I have?

The broker for The Corps Network plan is Willis Towers Watson. The contacts at Willis Towers Watson are Julie Nelson, Chris Rooney or another member of the Benefits team. They can be reached at julie.nelson@willistowerswatson.com or chris.rooney@willistowerswatson.com.

Note About Plan Administration after Initial Sign Up

Once your Program is set up for coverage at Ascension, the Program Administrator will receive an email from “donotreply” with portal login instructions. Adds, terminations and changes of corpsmember information will all be done by the Program Administrator on Ascension’s online enrollment portal. On the 13th of each month, you will receive an email alert from Ascension Benefits & Insurance Solutions that your invoice is ready to download.

ECO AmeriCorps

How to Use Your Coverage

Medical Claims

1. **Choose your provider** –You receive better benefits based on discounted charges when you choose a Preferred Provider from CIGNA's Open Access Plan (OAP) network. To look up a specific provider or obtain a list of preferred providers, please visit www.cigna.com or call 1-800-244-6224.

2. **Make the appointment** – When asked, your insurance provider is CIGNA.

3. **Bring your ID card** to the provider's office/facility. If you have lost your ID card or have not received one, print a temporary ID card from myCigna.com or use the myCigna mobile app.

Looking up Preferred Providers:

- Go to www.cigna.com
- Click on 'Find a Doctor"
- Click "Select a Plan for your search"
- Select "Open Access Plus, OA Plus, Choice Fund Plus" plan
- Enter search criteria
- Narrow your search along left side of results page

Preferred Provider Network: CIGNA OAP
Group #: 3338030
Claims Processor/Administrator: CIGNA
Member ID #: Your Social Security Number

4. The provider's office will probably want to **verify your eligibility and benefits**. They can do this by contacting CIGNA customer service at 1-800-244-6224.

Why use a Preferred Provider?

- Preferred provider fees are discounted
- Benefit level is higher (80% vs. 60%)
- Preferred providers will request all necessary prior authorizations on your behalf
- Preferred providers are obligated to bill insurance on behalf of the covered member

Non-network providers are not obligated to bill insurance first and may require you to pay upfront. If billed directly, ask for a claim form to submit for reimbursement. Medical claims should be sent to:

The Corps Network Claims

CIGNA

PO BOX 182223

Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223

Prior Authorization for Medical

Some procedures, and all inpatient admissions, must be authorized with CIGNA before they will be covered. If you use a Preferred Provider, the provider will handle the prior authorization for you. A partial list of outpatient procedures that require prior authorization includes:

- Certain outpatient surgeries
- Advanced Radiology such as MRI, CAT and PET scans
- Durable medical equipment
- Speech therapy
- Diagnostic cardiology
- Radiation therapy

Prescription Drug Claims

Fill your prescription at a CIGNA preferred pharmacy to minimize your out of pocket expenses. Prescriptions are subject to the deductible and then covered by the plan at 80% if you use a CIGNA preferred pharmacy. You will pay your co-insurance at the time you fill your prescription (after the deductible is met) and the plan will process the balance of the claim.

The plan requires prior authorization for some prescription drugs. Ask your pharmacist or contact CIGNA at 1-800-244-6224.

Online Resources

myCigna.com

Register on myCigna.com after your coverage effective date. The site is completely personalized for you, secure and it's easy to quickly find exactly what you're looking for. Resources available on the site include:

- Find doctors, pharmacies and hospitals in the CIGNA network
- Manage and track claims
- Print a temporary ID card
- Verify coverage details
- Estimate medical costs and prescription tool
- Compare providers/quality and efficiency ratings

Health and Wellness

- Confidential online health assessment
    - Interactive library of health conditions, first aid, wellness and more
- Cigna Health Rewards Discounts – Weight management, nutrition, fitness, hearing and more

Register on my Cigna.com

- myCigna.com>Learn How to Register

Take the Tour

- myCigna.com>Site Benefits

myCigna Mobile App

Download the app to your smartphone to access information on the move. Look up providers, access ID cards, view claims, research drug information and store important contacts.

Accessing Ascension Benefits & Insurance Solution's Website

Ascension Benefits & Insurance Solutions' website houses benefits information and other helpful documents. The site provides:

- Benefit Summary
- Forms and Resources
- Online Tutorial

To log in:

1. Go to http://4studenthealth.ascensionins.com/
2. Locate "Start Here"
3. Select "The Corps Network" from the School/Organization drop down box

Online Tutorial

The online tutorial provides a clear explanation of how to use The Corps Network Plan. It can be displayed by a program at orientation or accessed any time on Ascension Benefits & Insurance Solution's website.

4. Select "TCN Health Plan for Members" from the "Select Your Plan" drop down box

24 Hour Nurseline

Cigna provides a health information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When you dial **800-564-9286**, you will be connected with a nurse who is ready to help answer your health questions. It can be a fever in the middle of the night or a question about a popular medication.

Health Plan Contact List

Organization	Primary Contact
The Corps Network The Corps Network is a national membership organization that provides various services to its member corps, including sponsorship of The Corps Network Health Plan. The Corps Network Plan complies with all AmeriCorps/CNCS requirements. Service organizations must be members in good standing with The Corps Network to be eligible for the program.	**Bobby Tillett**, Member Services Coordinator *Phone:* 202-737-6272 *Email:* btillett@corpsnetwork.org *Website:* www.corpsnetwork.org
Willis Towers Watson Willis Towers Watson, as the broker for The Corps Network, created the Health Plan in February of 1992. They provide ongoing management of the insurance program. Willis Towers Watson is also available for general questions and concerns from either directors or individual participants.	**Julie Nelson**, Assistant Vice President *Phone:* 206-812-7296 *Email:* julie.nelson@willistowerswatson.com
CIGNA – Group Number 3338030 Administration of corpsmembers' medical/prescription drug coverage is done by CIGNA. Claims processing and customer service, as well as generation of welcome packets, is handled by CIGNA. All medical/prescription claims should be submitted to the address below. *Claims Address* The Corps Network Claims CIGNA PO Box 182223 Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223	**Customer Service (Medical/Prescription)** *Phone:* 1-800-244-6224 *Website:* www.cigna.com or: www.myCigna.com
CIGNA Open Access Plus (OAP) Preferred Provider Networks The OAP network allows you to receive a higher benefit from the plan and reduce your out-of-pocket expenses for both medical and prescription drugs.	**Provider Lookup** *Phone:* 1-800-244-6224 *Websites:* www.cigna.com; www.myCigna.com
Ascension Benefits and Insurance Solutions (formerly Summit) Eligibility, billing, generation/mailing of ID cards and premium collection are handled by Ascension Benefits. Ascension Benefits and Insurance Solutions also handles any questions related to these functions. *Ascension Benefits and Insurance Solutions* *PO Box 25936* *Overland Park, KS 66225*	**Eligibility** Diann Williams, Client Service Specialist *Email*: diannwilliams@ascensionins.com *Phone:* 1-800-955-1991 ext. 2593 *Group email:* corps@ascensionins.com *Fax:* 913-327-0201 Eligibility passes through Ascension and questions regarding eligibility should be directed to them rather than Cigna.

CIGNA – Group Number 3338030

CIGNA is the insurance company contracted to handle the dental/vision benefits available under The Corps Network insurance plan. They process the claims and provide customer service.

Claims Address
The Corps Network Claims
CIGNA – Dental/Vision Claims
PO Box 182223
Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223

Customer Service/Claim Forms

Dental - Phone: 1-800-244-6224
Vision – Phone: 1-877-478-7557
Website: www.cigna.com

Green Mountain Care: Medicaid

Medicaid

- For the Aged, Blind and Disabled (MABD): Medicaid for people who are 65 or older, blind or disabled. Go to the Department for Children and Families website to get details about the program and to apply.
- For Children and Adults (MCA): Medicaid for children as well as adults under age 65 who are not blind or disabled. Eligibility is based on household income size (this includes Dr. Dynasaur which is specifically for children under age 19 and pregnant women). Go to Vermont Health Connect to get details about the program and to apply.

Covered Services

Service *** = Limitations** **+ = More Information**	**Covered?**
Ambulance	Y
Certifed Nurse Midwife	Y
Chiropractic *	Y
Community Mental Health Center	Y
Dental *	Y
Dentures	N
Diabetic Supplies	Y
Eye Exams*	Y
Eyeglasses	N
Family Planning	Y
Gynocological Services (ob-gyn)	Y
Hearing Aids *	Y

Home Health Nursing	Y
Home Health Aide	Y
Hospice	Y
Immunizations	Y
Inpatient Hospital	Y
Lab Tests and X-rays/Imaging *	Y
Medical Equipment	Y
Maxillofacial Surgery	Y
Medical Supplies	Y
Mental Health Counselors	Y
Naturopaths *	Y
Nurse Practitioners	Y
Nursing Facility *	Y
Nutrition Therapy	Y
Occupational Therapy *	Y
Ophthalmologist	Y
Organ Transplants	Y
Orthodontics	N
Outpatient Hospital *	Y
Over-the-Counter Drugs	Y
Physical Therapy*	Y
Podiatry*	Y

Prescription Drugs	Y
Primary Care Providers (PCP)	Y
Prosthetics	Y
Psychiatrists	Y
Psychologists	Y
Psychiatric Hospital *	Y
Respiratory Therapy	Y
Specialist Services (non-PCP)	Y
Speech/Language Therapy *	Y
Substance Abuse Treatment +	Y
Transportation +	Y

Copayments

Copayments are never required for the following beneficiaries:

1. Individuals in a long-term care facility

2. Those under age 21

3. Those who are pregnant or in a 60 day post-pregnancy period

Prescriptions:

$1.00 for prescriptions costing less than $30.00

$2.00 for prescriptions costing $30.00 or more, but less than $50.00

$3.00 for prescriptions costing $50.00 or more

Dental:

$3.00 per visit for dental services

Outpatient:

$3.00 per day per hospital for outpatient services

Limitations

Chiropractic:

Chiropractic services are limited to treatment by means of manual manipulation of the spine for the correction of a misalignment of the spine. Coverage is limited to ten (10) treatments per calendar year per beneficiary. Treatments beyond ten per year require prior authorization.

Dental:

The dental benefit is limited to $510.00 per beneficiary per calendar year. Non-covered services include; cosmetic procedures; and certain elective procedures, including but not limited to: bonding, sealants, periodontal surgery, comprehensive periodontal care, orthodontic treatment, processed or cast crowns and bridges. Prior authorization is required for most special dental procedures.

Eye Exams:

One comprehensive eye exam and one intermediate eye exam within a two year period, -or - Two intermediate eye exams within a two year period

Hearing Aids:

Hearing aids are limited to one hearing aid per ear every three years for specified degrees of hearing loss.

Lab Tests and X-rays/Imaging:

The following outpatient high-tech imaging services require prior authorization:

- Computed tomography (CT) (previously referred to as CAT scan);
- Computed tomographic angiography (CTA);
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI);
- Magnetic resonance angiography (MRA);
- Positron emission tomography (PET); and
- Positron emission tomography-computed tomography (PET/CT).

Laboratory services for urine drug testing is limited to eight (8) tests per calendar month. This limitation applies to tests provided by professionals, independent labs and hospital labs for outpatients. Exceptions to this limitation require prior authorization.

Naturopaths:

Services are limited to those specified in protocols for licensure and reviewed and accepted by the State of Vermont, Director of the Office of Professional Regulation, and are services covered by Medicaid.

Nursing Facility:

Short-term Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) stay that is limited to not more than 30 days per episode and 60 days per calendar year.

Outpatient Hospital:

Administratively necessary or court ordered tests are not covered, unless they are medically necessary.

Podiatry:

Podiatrists' services are limited to non-routine foot care.

Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech/Language Therapy:

Services are limited to thirty (30) therapy visits per calendar year, and include any combination of physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech/language therapy. Prior authorization beyond 30 therapy visits in a calendar year will only be granted to beneficiaries with the following diagnoses:

- Spinal Cord Injury
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Amputation
- Severe Burn

More Information

For more information or to apply, please visit: http://www.greenmountaincare.org/vermont-health-insurance-plans/medicaid. You may also call Green Mountain Care Member Services at **1-800-250-8427**