



AmeriCorps

2023-24 ECO AmeriCorps

Forest Steward

Environmental Careers and Opportunities (ECO) AmeriCorps is an AmeriCorps program within the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC). ECO AmeriCorps is funded in part by an AmeriCorps state grant provided through SerVermont from the Corporation for National & Community Service. Service sites will provide meaningful service opportunities, regular supervision with oversight of service hours and timesheets, office space and office equipment, orientation to the worksite, additional training (as needed) and mileage reimbursement. The 2023-2024 program will begin mid-September 2023 and end in August 2024.

To be considered, service sites must:

- Demonstrate a commitment to DEIJ principles and provide a pathway for involvement at the host site and program level.
- Be a non-profit, municipality, state agency, tribal government, or educational institution.
- Provide a position description showcasing activities that are appropriate to the mission of ECO AmeriCorps.
- Provide a work environment that is ADA compliant, drug-free, and carries supplies and equipment necessary for members to perform their duties.
- Be able to provide the cash match and mileage reimbursement at the federal General Services Administration (GSA) rate for service-related travel for the member.
- Attend a supervisor orientation and be available for a minimum of two subsequent site visits and check-ins from ECO AmeriCorps staff.
- Clarify any additional responsibilities to the member according to your organization's policies.
- Notify ECO AmeriCorps staff about conflicts or other issues as they arise.

Other Requirements and Responsibilities:

- Confirm member selection, on-site training, member supervision and support throughout term of service, other forms and documentation as required by AmeriCorps, mileage reimbursement for service-related travel.
- Main supervisor must attend AmeriCorps supervisor orientation (or make special arrangements).

Host Site cost based on # of full-time employees:

Full-Time (1,700 hours over 11 months)

- 0-3 \$8,000
- 4-10 \$9,000
- >10 \$10,500

Half-Time (900 hours over 6 months)

- \$5,250 regardless of size

Quarter-Time (450 hours over 3 months)

- \$2,625 regardless of size

For more information about the host site application:

- Visit the ECO Website for supporting documents: www.ecoamericorps.org
- Or contact Program Supervisor, Dustin Bowman, dustin.bowman@vermont.gov, 802-461-5222

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is sponsoring AmeriCorps positions through its AmeriCorps Program. The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Positions are open to all applicants without regard to race color, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran's status, religion, or creed.

Name of Organization or Municipality:

Hildene, The Lincoln Home

Address of Organization or Municipality:

PO Box 377, Manchester, VT 05254

Primary Supervisor Name and Title:

Andrea Luchini, Horticulturist and Greenhouse Manager

Primary Supervisor's email:

andrea@hildene.org

Primary Supervisor's phone #:

8023677966

Please provide a brief description of your role at your site:

Identify, guide, and collaboratively execute ecologically based land management practices in gardens, grounds, and forests. Manage teaching greenhouse and oversee annual, perennial, and woody plant production.

Full-Time (September-August)

Describe your proposed service project.

[Note: performance measures are based on improved acres of public land, improved miles of waterways or trails, number of Vermonters provided environmental stewardship education or training, and number of members placed in green jobs after completing their AmeriCorps service. Capacity- building activities are allowed. Please describe any projected impact.]

Hildene is a 412-acre property centered around the historic home of Robert Lincoln (son of President Abraham Lincoln). It is nestled in the Valley of Vermont, between the Taconic and Green mountain ranges. The property includes a 1905 Georgian Revival mansion, a 1903 Pullman train car, ornamental and vegetable gardens, orchards, two working farms, a teaching greenhouse, and 12 miles of trails through forest, meadow, and wetland. Every year, Hildene welcomes over 40,000 guests and over 3,000 schoolchildren. They come to tour the estate and to enjoy the extensive educational programs for all ages which include summer camps, community and school programming, lectures, and a unique collaboration with our local high school.

This dynamic property has a trail network that connects all the diverse aspects of the estate from the historic home, farms, and forest, to the Batten Kill valley below. As forest steward, the member will promote healthy forests on our property through the trail network. This will include 1.) performing general trail maintenance (including invasive plant removal), 2.) leading a trail walk program, and 3.) advancing our native woody plant nursery. The aim of this position is to provide member with experience in environmental stewardship from the forest perspective and to make connections with the larger community.

What data collection tools will the member use to record the impacts of their service activity?

Surveys for educational programming

Plant counts for woody plant nursery

ARC GIS field maps for tracking invasive removal

Please provide any additional information (data, statistics, reports, etc.) that demonstrates the compelling need for the proposed position:

There is an expressed need in the community for a local source of native woody plant seedlings (including Bennington County Conservation District, Bennington County Regional Commission, US Forest Service).

Hildene does not use pesticides to control weeds, so we need to use alternative methods to control the spread of invasive plants in our almost 200 acres of forest.

With over 40,000 visitors a year, there is a real need for trail improvements that will encourage people to get outside and enjoy the entire property, not just the exhibits. Hildene strives to see the education potential in every activity and the trails provide ample opportunity for interactions between people and nature.

What initiatives does your organization take to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice (DEIJ)? Please include any historical data or details for on-going strategic plans, partnerships, and projects, as relevant.

Hildene staff formed an IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility) committee in 2020 to create an inclusive space for civil civic discourse (a key action of our mission) and to serve as an organizing force to assist in advancing the organization's stated values of integrity, perseverance, and civic responsibility in an intentional way. While the committee has hit some roadblocks, there is a core group of staff committed to this work which continues to push forward.

Other plans and projects:

- Through Burr & Burton Academy's Hildene-based Farm and Food Studies program - educating about food security/food sovereignty.
- Land stewardship practices support environmental justice by modeling watershed protection.
- Participated (and will continue to participate) in an inaugural Juneteenth event in Bennington and supported this initiative with displays in our Welcome Center.

Outline how DEIJ principles can be incorporated into your organization's work moving forward. (Provide examples of any trainings, workshops, projects, partnerships, etc.)

- Increase buy-in from full staff community and leadership through civil civic discourse.
- IDEA committee aims to collaborate on in-process employee handbook.
- Assist in promoting the Bennington Juneteenth event to a wider audience.
- Hildene's collection provides avenues for exhibits, programming, and displays celebrating Black history and Women's history; DEIJ principles sustain and re-invigorate our dedication to these efforts.
- Develop partnerships with more diverse communities.
- Build structure and systems within organization to support DEIJ work.

Describe specific challenges that your organization has faced while integrating DEIJ Principles.

A core group of staff have worked hard on integrating these principles into our work culture. We formed a committee, shared information and resources, and surveyed the entire staff with questions relating to their perception of the relevance of IDEA work to Hildene's mission. In this process we realized we, as an organization, need to re-visit our core mission and achieve a mutual understanding of that before we can move forward.

Other issues include:

- Limited staff and a lack of mental capacity and time due to seasonal nature of organization.
- Organizational structure of Hildene limits its ability to address and fully embrace DEIJ principles.

How will the ECO member be included or supported in on-going or future DEIJ work at the organization, if they so choose?

We hope the ECO member will participate in the IDEA committee and create a bridge between ECO DEIJ committee and our committee. If the member feels comfortable with this work, we will also support

initiatives to reach out to local underserved communities/groups and find increased opportunities for more diverse participation in ECO programming, which will lead to a more diverse audience for Hildene as a whole.

Does the supervisor have adequate time and leadership experience to manage an ECO member? Please explain how:

I have twenty years of experience supervising various numbers of staff in different employment situations.

Time is always at a premium, but we are committed to making this work! I will be the primary supervisor of the ECO member, but one colleague will be a secondary supervisor and others have committed to supervising certain aspects of the position. The ECO member should feel like a fully supported member of the team.

Will the member have access to networking opportunities in this position? Please explain:

The ECO member will serve closely with Hildene staff in various departments including horticulture, agriculture, grounds, programming, advancement, and education.

In advancing the native plant nursery, member will be asked to reach out to area organizations such as the US Forest Service, Bennington County Conservation District, Bennington County Regional Commission as well as other native plant nurseries in the area.

The ECO member will have the opportunity to serve with students from Burr & Burton Academy through the Hildene-based Farm and Food Studies program.

And there is ample opportunity for the member to pursue additional interest-based networking.

Does your organization currently host or plan to host an AmeriCorps member from another program? If yes, briefly describe the duties of this other position.

No

Please list any clothing/equipment the member will need that you cannot provide (e.g., hiking boots, waders, raingear, etc.). Is a reliable vehicle expected? As the host site, you are responsible for providing all tools and technical equipment needed for the position (e.g., computer, phone, GPS, etc.).

Hiking boots/closed toed sturdy shoes, rain gear, and general outdoor clothing for all weather conditions.

Is there someone in your organization's network that might be interested in mentoring your ECO service member? *Note, 1-2 hours per month, not required

Maybe

Are you willing to search with program staff over the summer to help your ECO member secure affordable and safe housing?

Yes

Many of our members are not from Vermont and are seeking a sense of community away from home. In what ways would you be willing to help them establish community connections? (Housing, peer networks, affinity spaces, local resources, fun places to go)

We have a wonderful and supportive staff community, of all ages, who are always willing to help new staff get connected to the area. We will all work with the ECO to try and find suitable housing and share our favorite places, activities, and personal interest groups. Hildene also allows staff (including ECO member) to join in any of our programming activities such as felting workshops and our virtual book club.

Water Quality and Trail Improvement - Please project Impact Numbers on miles of river/stream/trail treated and/or improved.

0.5 miles

Land Conservation and Remediation - Please project impact numbers on acres of public parks or other public, publicly managed or tribal lands improved.

5 acres

Community Engagement Outreach and Education - Please project number of individuals receiving environmental stewardship education or training.

75

Sponsoring Organization's Mission:

Hildene exists to carry the values of Abraham Lincoln to future generations by educating and inspiring others to put those Values into Action. Our core values are integrity, perseverance, and civic responsibility and our key actions are land conservation, historic preservation, sustainability, and civil civic discourse. In all we do, we strive to inspire guests to make the world a better place.

Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position:

To continue the momentum started by our first ECO AmeriCorps service member – advance our woody native plant nursery, perform invasive management along our 12 miles of trails, and conduct a regularly scheduled trail walk program. Beyond the basic functions of the position, we hope for the service member to make connections within Hildene and to the greater community. This includes, but is not limited to, serving on the steering committee of the Batten Kill Cisma, serving on Hildene's IDEA committee, conducting educational trail walks for various groups, and collaborating closely with the local high school's Hildene-based Farm and Food Studies program.

Essential Functions. Functions that applicant must be able to perform. These may be listed in bullet form:

- Advance native woody plant nursery by collecting seeds from the forest, performing seed treatments and sowing with follow-up seedling care; also performing other nursery-related tasks such as potting up, researching best practices, and coordinating plant sales to area organizations. Requires knowledge and/or interest in plant identification and plant propagation.

- Ability to assess status and perform general maintenance of trail system using hand tools such as pruners, loppers, and saws.
- Perform manual invasive plant removal using hand tools and assist with goat invasive plant browsing project as needed.
- Implement a series of forest-related education programs in collaboration with the programming director. Requires knowledge of and/or interest in environmental education and communicating.

What are the secondary functions? These are projects or tasks that may be accomplished as time allows or applicant's interests evolve.

- Potential to use power tools such as chainsaws if experienced or willing to take training course.
- Potential to develop other interest areas that fit within Hildene's mission and capacity.

Desired Qualifications:

- Candidate must have excellent time management skills and be able to self-direct.
- Ability to successfully perform computer-based tasks creating and revising plans, protocols, and other related documents. This primarily happens in winter.
- Ability to successfully perform hands-on field work in all weather conditions.
- Able to adjust quickly to changing circumstances by taking initiative and problem-solving
- Ability to serve on multiple projects simultaneously while maintaining attention to detail and producing a steady volume of results in order to meet deadlines.
- Ability and desire to lead educational programs for the public
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Ability to communicate with different personalities.
- Be true to Hildene's history and mission
- General knowledge of Vermont's flora and fauna

Minimum Qualifications:

- Be a US citizen, a national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S.;
- Be at least 18 years of age upon entering the Pre-Service Orientation (there is no upper age limit);
- Be a high school graduate or have a GED certificate or be willing to work towards their GED as part of their service-year successful completion requirement. A member cannot have dropped out of high school to join AmeriCorps. If a member has a documented medical reason/professional opinion why they cannot finish high school, they might be eligible; call in this case;
- Has not been convicted of murder or sexual assault and is willing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check;
- Must submit to Agency of Human Services checks, i.e. Adult Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention;
- Be committed to the ECO AmeriCorps program, and its ethic of service and personal and professional development of its participants;

- Have the ability and enthusiasm to drive to, attend, and participate in required trainings and events, and be prepared to drive up to 2-3 hours each way

Service Conditions (will the position be largely outside, office based, hybrid or seasonally/project dependent, in schools, etc.) *

Hybrid/seasonally dependent - office, greenhouse, outside

Will the member have access to "vulnerable populations"? This includes youth, elderly and individuals with disabilities.

Yes

Time Requirements:

Full time: will need to complete a minimum of 1700 service hours, serving approximately 40 hours/week over the course of the 11-month service term, September 13, 2023 - August 9, 2024

Orientation and Training:

ECO will provide members with orientation at the beginning of the service term. Host sites are expected to provide additional on-boarding training as well. Throughout the service term, ECO will provide in-person and virtual trainings to members on a variety of topics.

Benefits:

- Education award of \$6,895 (pre-tax) upon successful completion of service
- \$23,000 Living Allowance, paid bi-weekly
- Training
- Childcare assistance, if eligible
- Health Coverage
- Access to AmeriCorps Alumni Network
- Student loan forbearance and interest payments, if eligible

Evaluation and Reporting:

Mid and final performance reviews, quarterly reports, weekly timesheets, and end of service survey.
Thank you for your interest in AmeriCorps!