



**AmeriCorps**

# 2023-24 ECO AmeriCorps

## **Assistant Water Quality Program Coordinator**

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: <https://dec.vermont.gov/administration-innovation/eco/current-host-organizations>;
- Or contact Program Supervisor, Dustin Bowman, [dustin.bowman@vermont.gov](mailto: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:

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Address of Organization or Municipality:

75 Fairfield Street

Primary Supervisor Name and Title:

Dean Pierce

Primary Supervisor's email:

dpierce@nrpcvt.com

Primary Supervisor's phone #:

802 524 5958

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

Which hosting category are you applying to?

Full-Time (September-August)

What is the title of the position you are requesting?

**Assistant Water Quality Program Coordinator**

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.]*

The goal of this position is to support water and other natural resource planning efforts in Northwest Vermont. Responsibilities will include assisting with project development, public education and outreach, municipal inventories, grant writing, and community meetings.

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

- Microsoft Excel and/or Google Sheets spreadsheets
- Smartsheet Inc. tables and dashboards
- Other yet to be identified tools

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

The NRPC region is home to three watersheds of the Lake Champlain basin with challenging levels of phosphorus and other pollutants: St. Albans Bay, Lake Carmi and Missisquoi Bay watersheds. St. Albans and Missisquoi Bays are targeted areas for improvement in the Lake Champlain TMDL. In addition, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties are target areas in Act 64 and two communities have MS-4 permits. This ECO AmeriCorps position will help NRPC by providing program and project assistance and providing additional capacity to help our communities implement the TMDL, Act 64 and MS-4 requirements. The amount of phosphorus reduction required over the life of the TMDL is in the vicinity of 60 percent. Progress toward the goal is included in DEC's annual performance report.

<https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/WID/CWIP/Vermont%20Clean%20Water%20Initiative%202022%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

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.

NRPC is strongly committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice both within the workplace and in ensuring we serve all populations within our region. . The NRPC strives to create an equitable and inclusive workplace for its staff in a breadth of ways. In addition to being an Equal Opportunity Employer, the NRPC has made pay equity and salary transparency a norm in our hiring practices. Environmental justice topics are often included in discussion during staff meetings. The executive director holds office hours regularly to check up on staff wellbeing and provides a space to share any concerns that staff may have. She also oversees and creates space for all staff that are interested in shaping our constantly evolving DEIJ practices.

The NRPC also aims to address DEIJ in our work in myriad ways, first starting with the goals of the NRPC's Board of Commissioners and the Region's Plan, which identifies goals and objectives for land planning moving forward. In March of 2022, the board adopted a statement of inclusion, which can be found here: <https://www.nrpcvt.com/about-nrpc/inclusive->

practices/#:~:text=NRPC%20celebrates%20diversity%20and%20welcomes,in%20the%20communities%20we%20serve

The NRPC has also retained the consulting firm Abundant Sun to "support the Board and senior leaders of NRPC by focusing upon developing greater leadership competence in the areas of Inclusive Leadership and Civil Discourse." The objective of this project includes "Create and support the development of a more inclusive workplace and external community culture," and the NRPC Board is in its second year of training. The regional plan, which is currently in progress, will have objectives dedicated in each area of planning towards addressing vulnerabilities and gaps in equity in transportation, economic development, education and housing. The introduction of the plan, which is currently in draft form, draws from a report on understanding vulnerabilities and disadvantages that the current ECO AmeriCorps member created this year.

Other parts of planning in recent years has included DEIJ work as part of its Healthy People, Strong Communities project that informed its Regional Plan, NRPC examined equity and potential barriers to education, services and employment. The plan includes goals and policies that address equity in transportation, economic development, education and housing. More recently NRPC has retained the consulting firm Abundant Sun to "support the Board and senior leaders of NRPC by focusing upon developing greater leadership competence in the areas of Inclusive Leadership and Civil Discourse." Work objectives include "Create and support the development of a more inclusive workplace and external community culture." Members of NRPC staff are also working with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and "participat[ing] in the development of the Transportation Equity Framework Legislative Report including coordinating regional meetings focused on achieving equity and inclusion in the transportation planning process."

The ECO AmeriCorps member for the past two years has been involved in several of the initiatives outlined above. The ECO participated in the meetings and process surrounding the approval of the declaration of inclusion. She also helped build a webpage of resources for municipalities, board members and NRPC webpage visitors to utilize for fostering inclusivity and equity in planning, business, and personal development. The ECO AmeriCorps member also took on a project to analyze and form a report on vulnerabilities and disadvantages that exist in communities in the Northwest Region, which has aided the writing of the regional plan and guidance in daily planning work at the NRPC. Finally, she has been involved in the Clean Water Service Provider project, of which includes a component for considering water quality projects that have environmental justice benefits.

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

The NRPC is continuing to learn from Abundant Sun and apply that learning across the organization. NRPC will continue to encourage staff understanding through trainings and other events and will support trainings in the subject financially. NRPC staff who supervise ECO AmeriCorps members will also avail themselves of opportunities for DEIJ training offered through the ECO program.

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

There are times at public meetings when ideas being presented are not well received or are perceived as threatening to the identities of some in attendance. The NRPC does its best to address any inappropriate behavior that results. But successfully navigating these situations can be difficult. As a result of one episode during which a vulgar and racist word was used during a public meeting, the NRPC responded

swiftly by discussing events with the antagonist, board members, and others. A decision was made to ask the antagonist to step down from the NRPC, and he complied. The Executive Director also made herself available to talk with staff about the incident. The Director and NRPC board are now creating a code of conduct that will set guidelines and expectations for those who serve.

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

If interested, the next ECO member will have many opportunities and be encouraged by the NRPC and their supervisor to participate in supporting DEIJ work at the NRPC. This can include being on independent projects, with teams in different planning realms to create a more equitable NW Vermont, or aiding the ECO Team with DEIJ efforts. ECO Dea Devlin's impact on DEIJ topics has significantly increased her Supervisor's understanding of the issues. He appreciates the willingness of ECOs who take on challenging yet warning tasks such as on DEIJ.

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

Yes. Dean Pierce has been the full-time supervisor for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 program years. He has provided regular support for the service members with weekly and daily check-in meetings and additional time as needed to provide project specific input and support. He has been with the organization for 1.5 years and manages the NRPC's water resource programs.

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

Yes. There are opportunities for networking at partner meetings (local, state and regional partners) or attending trainings and conferences.

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.

At present, 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.).

Clothing and shoes appropriate for seasonal field work (hiking boots, waterproof knee high boots, waterproof jacket, etc) are required. - A reliable car for transportation, use of personal vehicle for conducting fieldwork also is required. (Reimbursement for mileage available. )

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)

NRPC is committed to helping ECO service members who are hosted in our region are provided with opportunities to build connections with other ECOs and members of the community. We have supported ECO participation in monthly gatherings of service members assigned to sites in northwest Vermont and will continue to do so. We will gladly share advice and information relating to housing, networks and more at the beginning of the ECO's term and throughout the year.

Provide approximate impact numbers (e.g. miles of rivers treated) in each focus area. Refer to the 2021-2022 Performance Goals document for an explanation on each focus area.

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

Focus will be on treating/cleaning streams/ In 2022-2023, 3/4 stream miles were cleaned, and in 2023-2024 a comparable number will be pursued.

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

Focus will be on improving lands through removal of invasive species and using GIS to target areas priority projects. In 2023-2024, our target will be 3-5 acres.

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

Focus will be on providing individuals with education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practice, with the goal of increasing knowledge and changing behavior. In 2022-2023, 432 individuals were reached though Lake Lessons programing, online webinars, and a public film screening. In 2023-24 we will aspire to a comparable number.

AmeriCorps Position Title:

**Assistant Water Quality Program Coordinator**

Program:

ECO AmeriCorps

Sponsoring Organization Name:

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Sponsoring Organization's Mission:

NRPC serves 23 municipalities in the Region and provides assistance on community development activities and issues. NRPC provides leadership and technical expertise to encourage cooperative planning within and among the region’s communities and area-wide interests.

## Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position:

The goal of this position is to support water and other natural resource planning efforts in Northwest Vermont. Responsibilities will include assisting with project development, public education and outreach, municipal inventories, grant writing, and community meetings.

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

- Assist in the development of water resource restoration and other natural resource projects. Specifically, this could include assistance with grant writing, screening for permits, draft memorandums of agreements or maintenance protocols and evaluating the performance of existing practices. - Assist with Clean Water Service Provider- related tasks, including project identification, prioritization, and progress tracking. - Using a Geographic Information System and other software tools, assist with the collection and processing of natural resource data; this task may involve assessing conditions on the ground, meeting as needed with staff of municipalities and other organizations, and calculating Phosphorus reduction benefits. - Develop and distribute public outreach materials (flyers, brochures, website content, videos) on stormwater management and water quality. Specifically, this position will be responsible for developing social media posts and updating content for the Franklin County Stormwater Collaborative. - Provide support for two Basin Water Quality Councils (attend meetings, assist with outreach, etc.) and related Committees.

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

- Assist with municipal projects such as grant writing and updates to municipal plans (Comprehensive Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, etc.). - Monitor project sites in region including those funded from prior grant efforts like shoreline stabilization sites, stream restorations, aquatic organism passage installations, etc. - Provide support to municipal and regional conservation groups and coordinate trainings in collaboration with partners.

## Desired Qualifications:

- Experience and familiarity with GIS as defined as the ability to interface with shapefiles or geodatabases, joining tables, creating maps and field data collection applications (Survey 123, ArcCollector). ESRI ArcGIS software preferred; NRPC currently running ArcGIS 10.7. - BA or BS in natural resources, environmental studies, planning, engineering or related field. - Ability to communicate well verbally and in writing - Ability to review data/reports/site plans, analyze trends, and convey information to the general public - Ability collaborate with a variety of volunteers and professionals - Experience with spreadsheets, databases, and social media - Driver's license and reliable vehicle - Experience building/maintaining outdoor features a plus.

## 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.) \*

NRPC has a central office but operates in a hybrid mode, and the ECO will have the opportunity to serve remotely as well.

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

No

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!