



AmeriCorps

2023-24 ECO AmeriCorps

Environmental Mental Health Education & Outreach 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

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:

Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation

Address of Organization or Municipality:

PO Box 343, St. Albans VT 05478

Primary Supervisor Name and Title:

Alex Lehning, Executive Director

Primary Supervisor's email:

alex.lehning@northernvermont.edu

Primary Supervisor's phone #:

(802) 730-5260

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

Alex is the primary administrator for VCPI - leading our mental health programming/research, fundraising/membership efforts, and coordinating outreach/development with community, academic, and workforce partners.

Which hosting category are you applying to? Note: ECO prefers full-time members for the vast majority of our program opportunities.

Please contact Supervisor dustin.bowman@vermont.gov with questions.

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.]

This position will be responsible for coordinating VCPI's environmental mental health initiative through service in: education and outreach activities, including surveys/data collection, developing and implementing programming, performing research, and leading community advocacy and engagement efforts.

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

This collaboration will utilize Qualtrics software for pre/post programming evaluations and assessments as well as workforce and community partner surveys.

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

A recent Forbes Health study found that 50% of Gen Z (and 46% of adults) listed mental health as their personal 2023 priority (over fitness, nutrition, and finances). Another landmark study (Hickman et al, 2021) determined that 84% of young people are extremely, moderately, or very worried about climate change. "Climate change is causing distress, anger and other negative emotions in children and young people worldwide, a survey of thousands of 16- to 25-year-olds has found. This 'eco-anxiety' has a negative impact on respondents' daily lives, say the researchers who conducted the survey, and is partly caused by the feeling that governments aren't doing enough to avoid a climate catastrophe." Meteorologist and author Bonnie Scheniner recently authored a book which examined the relationship between environment and mental health. "Our environment affects the core drivers of health. Temperature changes, air and water quality, food safety and availability, and even our emotional well-being are tied up with our natural surroundings. Changes to these variables can impact both healthy people and those with preexisting conditions."

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.

VCPI supports DEIJ principles in alignment with our fiscal sponsor, Northern Vermont University: We serve our community as a resource and catalyst for social justice consultation, advocacy, and activism.

-Engaging in consistent, open, and honest communication with each other and with all members of our community.

-Actively collaborating with all members of our community in regard to issues of social justice.

-Providing consultation and resources to colleagues in our community on issues related to social justice.

-Advocating for, by working with, disenfranchised members of our community.

-Coordinating programming which addresses the social justice needs in our community.

-Creating opportunities for activism in support of social justice in our community.

-Providing leadership in our community on issues related to social justice.

-Engaging in an ongoing process of self-assessment and accountability.

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

VCPI is a steering committee member for WAVE - Working to Advance Vermont Equity. Our staff help design and participate in monthly meetings, annual retreats, and coordinate workshops and trainings. We are also a Mental Health Equity funded partner with The Vermont Department of Health.

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

Like many Vermont organizations and municipalities, VCPI has encouraged resistance to our work in support of dismantling systemic racism and discrimination. We acknowledge that our organization and staff's own internal biases, identifies, and experiences can be both an opportunity and a barrier to addressing DEIJ principles. We are committed to ongoing reflection, education, and implementation within our mission, frameworks, and programs through participation in WAVE, as well as continuing anti-oppression training with AORTA and participating in Vermont State College Systems DEIJ efforts.

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

This service position will be invited to participate in WAVE and support VCPI's mental health equity efforts and have access to AORTA and NVU/VSCS trainings.

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

Yes; this position would be VCPI's second FT ECO-AmeriCorps member. Throughout the first year, our supervisor Alex Lehning has learned how to effectively and efficiently maintain collaborative communication, provide meaningful mentoring, and to offer aligned experiences for personal and professional growth - responding to constructive feedback and ECO program needs. While it was not always an easy inaugural process, there was demonstrated progress in terms of creating a service environment with the necessary leadership, experience, and management to be successful.

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

Yes; VCPI participates in educational programming with our local watershed partners in Franklin County as well as statewide workforce partners in mental health.

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.

N/A

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.).

This service position is primarily remote. If the member does not have access to a reliable personal computer, broadband-level internet access, a cell phone, or a printer they will be provided. We encourage ownership of reliable personal transportation for in-person events, workshops, and/or staff meetings (as public transportation may not be available in all areas).

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

Yes

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)

VCPI is connected to the broader Vermont State College System, so the ECO member would have access to professional development activities, learning opportunities, and recreational events. Our team is also engaged in advocacy efforts (Recovery Day, Mental Health Day, Green Up Day) and offers Mental Health First Aid and mindfulness training to our staff.

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

0

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

0

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

500

AmeriCorps Position Title:

Environmental Mental Health Education & Outreach Coordinator

Program:

ECO AmeriCorps

Address: Davis 1, 1 National Life Dr Montpelier, VT 05620

Sponsoring Organization Name:

Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation

Sponsoring Organization's Mission:

Our mission is to lead a statewide community partnership promoting innovation, practice improvement, implementation and workforce development to enhance and improve the experiences and outcomes of individual and families experiencing mental health and substance use conditions.

Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position:

This position will be responsible for coordinating VCPI's environmental mental health initiative through education and outreach activities, including surveys/data collection, developing and implementing programming, performing research, and leading community advocacy and engagement efforts.

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

- Create/design environmental mental health communications for our statewide mental health & educational partners (K-12; college) network
- Collect and analyze data to help understand and address “eco-anxiety & climate distress”
- Participate in staff (in-person and remote) meetings for program & project development
- Perform research on environmental mental health issues
- Collaborate with partners & constituents to share data and resources through coordination of events, guides/toolkits, and digital/social media outreach
- Assist with leading relevant trainings & special events, including service-learning opportunities
- Track project data and collect evaluations for the program’s performance measures
- Attend all ECO AmeriCorps trainings and orientations
- Complete and submit all necessary documentation and reports by predetermined deadlines

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

Members may present their findings to a professional association, conference, or publish in a relevant journal or news publication; member will be invited to complete Mental Health First Aid and mindfulness trainings.

Desired Qualifications:

Bachelor’s Degree, training and/or experience in the environmental sciences, behavioral sciences, eco-humanities, or a related area. Candidates should be comfortable with (or willing to learn) standard office software, interacting with students and adults of all backgrounds, authoring communications and research materials, and independent management of project responsibilities. Experience with Qualtrics, Canva,

Google Workspace, and/or Canvas (learning management system) software is a plus. We ask for flexibility, curiosity, and a willingness to explore an interdisciplinary emerging field of study.

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.) *

This service position is situated in a shared environment with opportunities for hands-on/place-based learning and engagement.

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

Yes

Time Requirements:

Half time: will need to complete a minimum of 900 service hours, serving approximately 40 hours/week over the course of a 6-month term from September 13th - March 1st, 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 \$3,447 (pre-tax) upon successful completion of service
- \$12,176 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!