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VHCB AmeriCorps
Member Handbook

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](https://www.segal.org) to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans.

**AmeriCorps Branches of Service**
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 people 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 in direct service positions 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 people 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.
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
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.
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 (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
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

AmériCorps
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 AmériCorps, 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.

National Service By the Numbers

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

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

Our Focus Areas

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

NationalService.gov
January 2017
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.
MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS IN VERMONT

More than 2,300 people, from all ages and backgrounds, are helping to meet the needs of their 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.

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 social impact. It harnesses the expertise of 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 one nonprofit in Vermont.

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 ServeVermont, 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.

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 AmeriCorps Branches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>AmeriCorps VISTA Projects</th>
<th>AmeriCorps State Programs</th>
<th>AmeriCorps National Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member term of service</td>
<td>Full-time only: 365 days</td>
<td>Full-time, Half-time, Reduced Half-time, Quarter-Time, Minimum-Time</td>
<td>Full-time, Half-time, Reduced Half-time, Quarter-Time, Minimum-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member stipend/living allowance payments</td>
<td>Administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (unless VISTA project has a Program Grant)</td>
<td>Administered by the Grantee</td>
<td>Administered by the Grantee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member support costs (stipend and benefits)</td>
<td>Covered by the Corporation (unless the VISTA project is a Cost-share)</td>
<td>Required for full-time members and optional for others. Programs can use Corporation grant funds or match funding to cover member support costs.</td>
<td>Required for full-time members and optional for others. Programs can use Corporation grant funds or match funding to cover member support costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Training</td>
<td>Corporation provides a Pre-service Orientation to all new VISTA members</td>
<td>Grantee is responsible for training members</td>
<td>Grantee is responsible for training members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Service</td>
<td>Capacity Building activities, incidental direct service only</td>
<td>Direct service and capacity building activities</td>
<td>Direct service and capacity building activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Fundraising</td>
<td>No limit on % of time spent raising funds for the organization</td>
<td>Cannot allot more than 10% of their time to fundraising for the AmeriCorps program</td>
<td>Cannot allot more than 10% of their time to fundraising for the AmeriCorps program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segal AmeriCorps Education award and end of term options</td>
<td>Members choose a Segal AmeriCorps education award OR a cash stipend, paid upon successful completion of service.</td>
<td>Members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education award appropriate for the term of service completed. There is NO choice of a cash option.</td>
<td>Members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education award appropriate for the term of service completed. There is NO choice of a cash option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational support costs</td>
<td>Projects contribute 100% of the operating costs in cash or in-kind</td>
<td>New programs must contribute a minimum of 24% of the total program costs in cash or in-kind.</td>
<td>New programs must contribute a minimum of 24% of the total program costs in cash or in-kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall grantee share of total budget increases gradually to 50% overall share by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter.</td>
<td>Overall grantee share of total budget increases gradually to 50% overall share by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter.</td>
<td>Overall grantee share of total budget increases gradually to 50% overall share by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no minimum match required for EAP and Fixed-Amount grants.</td>
<td>There is no minimum match required for EAP and Fixed-Amount grants.</td>
<td>There is no minimum match required for EAP and Fixed-Amount grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation grant support</td>
<td>Training and support money may be available</td>
<td>Funding amount based on Member Service Years (MSY) and varies based on type of program.</td>
<td>Funding amount based on Member Service Years (MSY) and varies based on type of program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Requirements</td>
<td>Program reports required quarterly in first year, often reduced to semi-annual thereafter; financial reports required only for programs receiving grants</td>
<td>Set by the State Commission</td>
<td>Programs submit annual progress reports due the first Monday in December and semi-annual Financial Status reports directly to the Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Submission process</td>
<td>Begins with a Concept Paper submitted to the Corporation State Office.</td>
<td>Begins with Commission issuing a Request for Proposals and applicants applying directly to the State Commission</td>
<td>Begins with submission of an application directly to the Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results Requirements</td>
<td>Member service must lift people out of poverty and be sustainable, program must address one or more CNCS strategic initiatives</td>
<td>Determined by State and CNCS priorities as well as program identified performance measures</td>
<td>Determined by CNCS priorities as well as program identified performance measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Deadline</td>
<td>No set deadline; contact your CNCS State Office</td>
<td>One annual deadline for each grant competition. Check with State Commissions for specific deadlines.</td>
<td>Specific annual deadline for Planning Grant applicants and a separate annual deadline for all other grant competitions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History of National Service

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.

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.

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
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.

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. 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 are 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 1700 hours, while half-time members will complete 900 hours of service. Members may sign on for a second term of service, but are not allowed to serve more than 4 terms of service. The member will need to 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 will attend an AmeriCorps Orientation before or at the start of their service.
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 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 Activity FAQ

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 Housing & Conservation Board Program, not a “volunteer”. We don’t want to disrespect people who give freely of their time by claiming we get no remuneration for the work we do, and yet we want to respect ourselves by acknowledging that we have committed to a year of national and community service by identifying as members of a movement. This term seems to work the best all the way around.

Volunteers are persons who 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 person (not work) 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 (however small) and an educational award for the service they commit to.

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

3. You serve at a “Host Site” of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board AmeriCorps Program and your supervisor is often referred to as the site supervisor. Sometimes Host Site Organization is shortened to “HSO”. Groups, organizations, schools, etc. with whom we join 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. We plan our own obsolescence due to the vagaries of political funding whims. Our goal is to leave communities empowered, so that they don’t need us in the future. If communities can continue these projects on their own without AmeriCorps program assistance, 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 what you do. Although what we may do may involve advocacy or solicitation of resources for a project, the Corporation for National Service is sensitive about the use of these words because of their mis-use and mis-interpretation in the past. It’s preferred that you say “I do support work with the residents,” or “I obtained donated materials for this project from XYZCorp,” etc.

7. AmeriCorps members complete direct service with organizations that amounts to increased capacity building, something that enables host sites to expand their reach further than they could have without your efforts.

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

Is AmeriCorps like 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 I 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, your motivation and commitment may be the primary requirement.

Do I get paid?

For all AmeriCorps programs, members receive a modest living allowance, and some programs provide housing. You 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?

You must be at least 17 years old, although some service opportunities require you 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 I join if I'm not a U.S. citizen?

You must be a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S. to be an AmeriCorps member.
Are there any loan forgiveness programs or repayment plans that I might qualify for as an AmeriCorps member?

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 student loans during my service with AmeriCorps?

You may qualify for postponement, or forbearance, of the repayment of your loans during your service. The education award will help you pay off qualified student loans when you're finished. Contact your lender for more specific information or to confirm your loan status during AmeriCorps service.

What if I'm out of school and not interested in the education award? Can I get that money in cash?

If you're part of AmeriCorps VISTA, you 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.

I am currently participating in AmeriCorps and have a question about my 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. If you have successfully completed your AmeriCorps service, you can view your AmeriCorps Education Award account balance and activity online. To request a copy of your AmeriCorps Education Award voucher or report a change of address, you can visit https://questions.nationalservice.gov/.
For general information on student financial assistance, you may contact your high school guidance counselor, the financial aid officer at the post-secondary institution you 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. Department of Education.
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 2020 fiscal year is $6,345. 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.

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 G.I 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 G.I. Bill and the
Post 9/11 G.I. 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](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 we are providing some basic guidance in making the most of your education award during your educational experience. We are also providing important information that you can pass on to 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.
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.
VHCB AmeriCorps Member Handbook

The VHCB AmeriCorps Program

Section 2
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board is an independent, state-supported funding agency which provides grants, loans, and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, municipalities and state agencies for the development of perpetually affordable housing and for the conservation of important agricultural land, recreational land, natural areas and historic properties in Vermont.

History

The pace and pattern of development in Vermont in the mid-1980’s was threatening historic settlement patterns and the rural character of the state. Housing prices were rapidly rising beyond the reach of Vermonters, development pressure on the state’s valuable agricultural and natural lands was escalating at a record pace, and historic properties and downtowns were being abandoned for suburban, sprawl development. In 1986, a coalition of affordable housing, conservation, and historic preservation advocates concerned with this rapid change in the character of the Vermont landscape approached the state legislature with a plan to form a unique agency to review and fund projects addressing a range of community needs. The Legislature responded, passing the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act, enacted in June 1987, and capitalized with $3 million.

The statute dictated the makeup of the nine-member Board: five citizen-members appointed by the Governor, (to include an advocate for low income Vermonters and a farmer), the Commissioners of the state agencies of Agriculture, Housing and Community Development, and Natural Resources, and the Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency. In July 1987, the Board held its first meeting.

In September 1987, then Governor Madeleine Kunin established a Commission on Vermont’s Future, charged with the mission of assessing the concerns of Vermont citizens on the issue of growth, establishing guidelines for growth, and suggesting mechanisms to help plan for Vermont’s future. Through a process of public hearings at which thousands of Vermonters spoke about their concerns, the Commission gathered public input to create their report, issued in January 1988, Guidelines for Growth. In 1988 Vermont had a budget surplus, and upon the recommendation of the Governor’s Commission on Vermont’s Future, the legislature appropriated $20 million to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board was up and running, and momentum was building. With the new source of state funding, housing and conservation nonprofits were able to conceive and carry out projects within communities around the state that had not previously been possible. VHCB funds closed a critical gap in the financing of affordable housing projects and brought new conservation funds to the table, initiating a new era in the conservation of Vermont’s agricultural lands and natural areas.
Today
Now in its 34th year, VHCB remains the forerunner in the nation in pioneering this comprehensive approach to affordable housing and community development linked with land conservation and historic preservation. The results have been impressive. With a cadre of nonprofit organizations working at the local level to identify and develop important projects in each community, the effects of 33 years of investment are discernible in every part of the state. VHCB has supported reinvestment in older housing in small town and village centers, revitalizing downtown neighborhoods where residents can walk to services, and rebuilding a sense of community while spurring other private investment. The conservation of Vermont’s open and wild lands preserves the landscape that is such an integral part of the state’s identity, supports the agricultural economy, protects wildlife habitat, and provides public access to the state’s waterways and woodlands.

Impact
Since its inception, the Board has awarded nearly $274 million to nonprofit housing and conservation organizations, towns, municipalities and state agencies to develop nearly 1,500 projects in 220 towns. This investment has directly leveraged approximately $1 billion from other private and public sources and resulted in the creation of more than 11,300 affordable homes, the conservation of 390,740 acres of agricultural and recreational lands and natural areas, and the restoration of 59 historic community buildings for public use. Many VHCB housing awards have supported housing in buildings eligible, nominated or listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Historic barns and farmhouses and archeological sites are located on many farms conserved with VHCB funding.
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board:  
33 Years of Partnership Investing in Vermont

$274 million in state funds invested by VHCB have allowed project partners (non-profit organizations, towns, municipalities and state agencies) to leverage an additional $1 billion from federal programs, foundations, private capital and other charitable donations.

Invested in:
- 11,300 homes & apartments;
- 620 farms; more than 146,000 acres of agricultural land conserved;
- 255,000 acres conserved for public recreation and natural areas;
- 59 historic buildings restored for community use;

Housing Investment includes:
- 1,000 homes for homeowners including 100 homes with Habitat for Humanity;
- Preserved 1,790 units of federally subsidized at-risk housing;
- 46 mobile home parks for over 1,900 families;
- 2,924 homes for individuals with special needs including frail elders, battered women, youth-at-risk, ex-offenders, persons with chronic mental illness and individuals with mobility impairments;
- 1,605 homes made accessible in partnership with the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

Land for Public Recreation includes:
- Support for Green Mountain Club’s protection of the Long Trail, now 95% complete;
- Investment in various trail systems: The Catamount Trail (north-south 300 mile cross country ski trail); Cross Vermont Trail (east-west trail through 17 towns);
- East Montpelier Trail system; Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association conservation of more than 1820 acres to create a 14-mile ridgeline trail and wildlife reserve between Rockingham and Putney;
- Creation and expansion of 11 state parks: Green River Reservoir, Knight Island, Alburgh Dunes, Lowell Lake, Kingsland Bay, Bomoseen, Brighton, Clarendon Gorge, Lyman Falls, Niquette Bay and Round Pond;
- Protection of Champion Lands – 133,000 acres for public recreation and wildlife;
- Significant nature preserves with The Nature Conservancy: High Pond Preserve, Hubbardton; Bald Mountain, West Haven; Black Mountain, Dummerston; Wilmarth Woods, Addison; Shelburne Pond; North Pawlet Hills; White River Ledges.

Historic Buildings for Public Use include:
- Farm Barn and Breeding barn at Shelburne Farms;
- Monitor Barn – Vermont Youth Conservation Corps headquarters;
- Brookfield, Jamaica, Ira, Pawlet, Brattleboro and West Rutland Town Halls;
- Latchis Theater, Brattleboro; Paramount Theater, Rutland; Flynn Theater, Burlington;
- Firehouse Arts Gallery, Burlington;
- Morrisville River Arts and Lamoille Grange Hall;
- Old Labor Hall, Barre;
OTHER PROGRAMS

In addition to VHCB funding programs for housing development and land conservation, a number of supplemental programs supported with state and federal funds provide services and capacity to improve housing and conservation opportunities for Vermonters and to assist farmers with economic development:

Farm and Forest Viability Program More than 400 farmers have participated in the Farm Viability Program, developed in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in 2003 to provide farmers with business planning and technical assistance.

VHCB AmeriCorps VHCB has administered $4.7 million in federal funds to place more than 400 AmeriCorps members with housing and nonprofit organizations statewide, providing community service, developing leadership skills and civic engagement.

Healthy Homes and Lead Paint Hazard Abatement Program More than 2,000 homes made lead-safe. The program provides financial and technical assistance to income-eligible landlords and home owners to reduce the risk of lead poisoning caused by lead-based paint hazards. Free trainings are provided in essential maintenance required by Vermont’s Lead Paint law. $19.6 million administered since 1994.

A new HUD grant will allow for development of the Healthy Homes Program to address additional health and safety issues beyond lead paint. Healthy Homes will add to existing rehabilitation programs, providing assistance to correct building issues that contribute to unhealthy living conditions like mold, moisture and pest infestation, and particularly affect vulnerable groups, such as children with asthma and the elderly.

HOME Program Increases the affordability of rental housing with federal funds; $61.4 million administered since 1992.
VHCB AmeriCorps Program

What is the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board AmeriCorps Program?
The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) AmeriCorps Program is a national service project that places AmeriCorps members with affordable housing, land conservation and environmental education organizations statewide. Members increase the capacity and effectiveness of the organization where they serve while gaining leadership skills and connecting with the mission and goals of a community based nonprofit organization.

VHCB AmeriCorps Mission

Since 1997, the VHCB AmeriCorps Program has been serving Vermont communities, cultivating leaders, and inspiring collaborative solutions to expand housing opportunities and steward our natural resources. Serving on the front lines of community-based organizations, VHCB AmeriCorps members energize, engage, and empower Vermonters to address unmet needs at a local level, collectively creating positive change statewide. Through a grass roots approach, we believe we can bring Vermonters together, incite a spirit of active citizenship and build a healthy future for Vermont.

What do VHCB AmeriCorps members do?

Housing Members
- Help homeless individuals and families find suitable housing, build life skills, develop résumés, access job training programs and obtain services.
- Assist first-time homebuyers to learn about budgeting and prequalify for low-interest mortgage loans at Vermont’s Homeownership Centers.
- Recruit volunteers, provide community outreach, make referrals, and provide direct services, information and technical assistance.
- Repair, make accessible and weatherize homes
- Provide residential services to low-income, elderly, and/or disabled individuals to help them maintain and remain in healthy, safe, affordable housing.

Conservation Members
- Provide environmental education and service opportunities for school-age youth.
- Educate groups about responsible hiking and camping practices.
- Increase public land access for individuals with emphasis on disadvantaged populations, and engage individuals in outdoor recreational activities.
- Recruit volunteers and raise awareness about conservation issues.
- Participate in natural area inventories, extract invasive plants and implement weed management plans.
- Perform trail maintenance, restoration and improvement.
- Co-develop, coordinate, and teach summer day camps and natural history programs.
- Create mailings, contact the media, produce newsletters, create and maintain database records and websites, organize special events.
- Educate residents and housing groups on energy conserving measures
Other Areas
- Connect individuals living in low-income housing units with better food access and nutrition education
- Serve with towns and cities to create energy committees or increase the capacity of existing committees.
- Help Host Sites research the needs of its clients/community to deliver better services

What else should I know?
Members decide which host site organization and position you would like to apply to, and by signing on, you are making an 11-month commitment to service. Throughout the term, you will serve closely with your supervisor in the host site organization.

The VHCB AmeriCorps Program is committed to member development and will work with members to ensure they are having a positive yet challenging experience during their term of service.
VHCB AmeriCorps

VHCB AmeriCorps 2021-22 Performance Goals

CNCS Approved Primary Performance Measures

Housing Placement Services

2,500 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless will have greater access to safe, affordable housing opportunities through housing placement and accessibility services provided by ACMs. Services will include housing identification, applications assistance, referrals, back rent and security deposit disbursements, and home sharing coordination.

450 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless, will transition into safe, affordable housing as a result of ACM services.

Living Independently and Residential Services

ACM’s will provide companionship, resource facilitation, food access, transportation, volunteer matching, and housing support to 500 individuals, including 150 individuals who are Homebound, Older Adults, and/or living with a disability.

75 individuals who are Homebound, Older Adults, and/or living with a disability will report increased social support due to member’s services.

Food Access and Nutritional Services

ACM’s will implement community gardens, provide emergency food, deliver meals, support food pantries, and provide nutritional services and education to 2000 individuals.

Improving Lands and Habitats through Environmental Stewardship

ACM’s will implement invasive species management, trail maintenance, boundary marking, easement monitoring, and tree planting/maintenance on 3,000 acres of parks and public lands. 2,000 acres of land will be assessed as improved according to the entities land management plan.
AmeriCorps Members will implement invasive species management; create, improve, and maintain access points; grow, plant, and maintain trees; remove debris; create and repair educational and safety signage; and improve trail accessibility. 100 Miles of trails will receive stewardship efforts, and 65 miles will be assessed as improved.

**Environmental, Energy, and Outdoor Education**

ACMs will deliver education on environmentally-conscious practices and outdoor recreation, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, sustainable agriculture, and public land access and recreational opportunities to 900 individuals resulting in greater knowledge and appreciation for the natural environment and how people can help conserve energy and care for natural eco-systems. Education will be delivered through school programs, public programs, day camps, home visits, and service learning projects. Only Individuals surveyed for behavior changes may be counted.

As a result, 600 Individuals will report a change in behavior or intention to change behavior toward more environmentally-conscious practices.

**Additional Secondary Program Performance Measures**

**Financial Literacy Services**

ACMs will provide financial literacy services including credit repair education and counseling, household budgeting, foreclosure prevention/intervention, home ownership education, outreach, and development and distribution of educational materials to at least 250 economically disadvantaged individuals. 50 individuals will demonstrate improved financial literacy knowledge.

**Housing Units Made Available**

ACMs will develop, repair, or otherwise make available 150 affordable housing units for low income individuals and families, including older adults and people with disabilities. 100 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless will remain in, transition into, or diminish risk of losing safe, affordable housing as a result of ACM services.

**Energy Efficiency**

ACMs will improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of 100 housing units and structures through weatherization, retrofits and other energy efficiency measures.
Volunteer Mobilization

VHCB AC members will recruit, train, supervise, evaluate and recognize 1000 community volunteers so that these volunteer efforts help to further the missions of VHCB AC's sponsoring organizations. Members will recruit at least 700 volunteers, and will manage at least 800 volunteers. The volunteers mobilized by VHCB AmeriCorps members will serve the equivalent of 5 full-time employees/10,400 hours of volunteer service at member host sites.

Capacity Building

In addition to volunteer mobilization, members involved in capacity building activities will expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of services, programs and their organizations. Activities may also leverage resources for programs and/or organizations so that lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations are achieved. Members will provide capacity building services for at least 25 organizations, will raise $5,000 worth of In-Kind or cash goods to support projects, and will improve 25 systems used by host sites such as information gathering, data tracking, organization outreach, community engagement, and internal communications. Note: AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of sponsors' program services but may not raise funds for an organization's general operating expenses or endowment.

Member Development

100% of VHCB AmeriCorps Members will participate in VHCB AmeriCorps Member Development Initiatives which includes member training, program initiatives, and service learning. Upon successful completion of their AmeriCorps term, all graduating members will report improvement in at least 3 life skills needed to better secure employment and become productive, engaged community members.
Alphabet Soup (VHCB AmeriCorps Acronyms)

**ACM** – AmeriCorps Member

**CHT** - Champlain Housing Trust

**CNCS** - Corporation for National and Community Service

**COTS** - Committee on Temporary Shelter

**COVER** – Corps of Volunteers Effecting Repair (COVER Home Repair)

**CTA** – Catamount Trails Association

**CVCOA** – Central VT Council on Aging

**GMC** – Green Mountain Club

**HOC** – Homeownership Center

**HSO** – Host Site Organization

**ISP** – Independent Service Project

**MPD** – Member Position Description

**NBNC** – North Branch Nature Center

**R.A.R.E.** – Regional AmeriCorps Recruitment Envoy

**TNC** – The Nature Conservancy (of Vermont)

**VINS** – Vermont Institute of Natural Science

**VHCB** – Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

**VNRC** – Vermont Natural Resources Council
VHCB AmeriCorps Initiatives

Independent Service Project (ISP)

All Full and Half-Time Members are required to complete an Independent Service Project (ISP) outside of their regular host site. Members are required to perform a minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 hours for ISP. The following guidelines apply to ISP projects:

1. ISP hours should not be served at the member’s host site. Hours should be served with another community organization or in some cases may be carried out independently by the member with host site or other entity sponsorship.

2. The member has the option of (1) creating and implementing their own community project or (2) serving the hours with an organization in a general capacity that will aid the organization’s mission. All of the 15-30 hours should be allotted to either one project or one organization, though projects may involve multiple community organizations/entities.

3. The member must gain approval from VHCB AmeriCorps in advance. Requests should be submitted via email to the AmeriCorps Leader.

4. The project/organization must be based in Vermont.

5. At the completion of the ISP hours, the member will submit the ISP Report which will include:
   - documentation of the hours served approved by a representative of the organization
   - a written report and reflection

6. Members may collaborate in pairs or teams to complete ISP hours.

7. ISP hours may be carried out in member’s off time, or during regularly scheduled onsite hours with prior approval from the supervisor.

8. All ISP activities must fall within AmeriCorps regulations and guidelines.

9. A total of 20 miles per member will be allowed for reimbursement for all ISP travel.

Peer Site Visits

VHCB AmeriCorps allows members to claim mileage and service hours for up to two peer site visits - visits to other VHCB Host Site Organizations. The member should schedule site visits with the member at the organization. Site Visits must be pre-approved by both the visiting member’s supervisor and by the supervisor at the site being visited. Site Visits are not required, but VHCB AmeriCorps encourages members to take advantage of this opportunity.

With the direct Supervisors approval, the member may claim hours for additional peer site visits, but may not claim mileage with VHCB AmeriCorps.

BOOK CLUB

The VHCB AC Book Club is designed to give members the opportunity to gain a greater knowledge of their service through reading, while gaining training hours toward their service term.

- Each book review may be worth up to a total of 10 training hours.
- Full-time members may complete up to 6 book reviews, half-timers 3, and quarter-timers 1.
• Members are limited to one review per month unless approval is given by Program Staff.
• All books must be educational and relevant to member service.

After reading the book, members should submit a review using the 'Book Review Form' to gain hours. On VHCB AC’s website, under the ‘Current Members’ tab, you will find a list of pre-approved books. These books may be selected without further approval for a review. If you would like to choose a book that is not on the list, please submit a request to VHCB AmeriCorps staff for approval prior to reviewing the book.

Hours should be claimed as a lump sum on the timesheet, only after the book review has been reviewed and approved by Program Staff. Accurate actual time tracking is kept using the Book Report Form. All AmeriCorps Rules and Regulations apply to Book Club hours.

R.A.R.E. Opportunity
The VHCB AmeriCorps Regional AmeriCorps Recruitment Envoy (R.A.R.E) Opportunity initiative is designed to engage members in community events, activities, and outreach that promote outside individuals to participate in AmeriCorps Programs. Such activities may include (but not limited to):

• attending college or career fairs
• tabling at community events or public spaces
• presenting to school or community groups
• publishing articles or writing op-ed pieces about the members service
• assisting individuals with filling out an AmeriCorps application
• one-on-one meetings with persons interested in knowing more about AmeriCorps
• encouraging friends and family to consider serving in AmeriCorps
• speaking with volunteer groups you serve with about your AmeriCorps Service
• etc.

Some R.A.R.E. Opportunity hours may occur as part of a member’s regular duties. Members may claim up to 15 service hours for R.A.R.E Opportunity Hours outside of their regular service. Participation in R.A.R.E. Opportunity is optional for members, but highly encouraged by the program. Member’s that participate for a minimum of 15 hours will receive a prize!
VHCB AmeriCorps Trainings & Events

VHCB AmeriCorps provides a series of trainings for Members throughout the course of the year. Attendance at all VHCB AmeriCorps trainings and events is required unless otherwise noted. Trainings and events include Orientation, Diversity/Equity/Inclusion, AmeriCorps Conference, MLK Day of Service, Team Building Activities, Service Days, Civic Reflection, Closing Ceremony, and More!

A schedule of trainings and events will be provided at the beginning of the year and updates will be distributed throughout the year as necessary. The Program makes every attempt possible to schedule trainings and events with at least 3 months notice to participants, though at times this is not possible.

Policies on Training Attendance:

- Members are expected to attend all VHCB AmeriCorps trainings (with the exception of those marked optional), and agree to do so in the Member Agreement.

- Other training days will possibly be made available as ‘optional.’ ACM’s 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 additional trainings by their Host sites, including required training events.

- Members may not spend more than 20% of their AmeriCorps hours in training

- Members who are unable to attend training due to circumstances out of the member’s control (i.e. illness, being away, family emergency, etc.) must notify program staff in writing as soon as possible.

- Members may not miss a training to serve at their site. Members are restricted from claiming hour for serving at the host site during required training days/times.

- Members are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to begin by the scheduled start time, including all virtual trainings, and remain engaged in the training event until the scheduled closing time.

- Members are expected to actively engage in trainings and events, and act in manner that is respectful of peers and facilitators.
Benefits of Service

In addition to having an opportunity to do meaningful, challenging service and gain real-world experience, there are many tangible benefits as well, including:

• Living allowance: $20,400 for full-time service; $10,800 for half-time; $5,400 for quarter-time
• AmeriCorps Education Award to be used for existing student loans or for future education in the next seven years.
• Health Insurance: Covers major medical, hospitalization and prescriptions.
• Travel Reimbursement: Non-commuting travel is paid for service-related activities.
• School Loan Forbearance: Deferment on federally subsidized school loans.
• Training Opportunities: In addition to an overnight Orientation, members have numerous training opportunities over the course of the year. Trainings may include Communicating through Conflict; Cultural Competency; Financial Literacy; Working with the Media; Poverty Issues; Volunteer Recruitment; Leadership; a Ropes Course and others. Additionally, members will attend a 2-day National Service Conference, a Team Retreat, several Group Service Days and a Closing Ceremony.
• Networking Opportunities: VHCB AmeriCorps is dedicated to offering its members a wide range of experiences and community engagement opportunities.
Who to Contact

Program Staff

Francis Sharpstene  802.828.3253  francis@vhcb.org  Program Director

Contact Francis for: Any and all issues that arise with your host site and/or supervisor that require guidance or resolve; contract questions, concerns or amendments; requesting extended time off; if you will miss a training or event; and payroll questions

Ashley Swasey  802.828.3249  ashley@vhcb.org  Program Coordinator

Contact Ashley for: paperwork and reporting questions; assistance with timesheets; mileage requests; income or benefits verification (i.e. 3squares) anything else in Francis’ absence.

AmeriCorps Leader  802.828.2425  AmeriCorps Leader

Contact Leader for general support, Program Initiatives, assistance with projects, media and outreach, peer support, and planning member events.

Open Door Policy

VHCB 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.

Supervisor

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 and time off. (Program staff should also be contacted for time off equaling one week or more)
- On-site service duties and tasks
- Issues related to direct service
- Training needs related to service
VHCB AmeriCorps
Member Handbook

Program Practices and Policies

Section 3
Members are contracted to fulfill the following number of hours –

**VHCB AmeriCorps required hours**
- Full-time: 1720
- Half-time: 915
- Quarter-time: 460
- Minimum Time: 310

**CNCS required minimum hours**
- Full-time: 1700
- Half-time: 900
- Quarter-time: 450
- Minimum Time: 300

The VHCB AmeriCorps Required Hours are set to ensure you have enough hours to exit the program successfully, and the number of hours that will be used to measure your hours progress throughout the service term. This is the minimum number of hours approved and verified, the member 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, the member is required to not only complete her/his service hour requirement, but also fulfill the dates of service agreed upon in the contract. In some cases, a contract may be amended if the member, the Program Director, and the Host Site Organization agree (please see following page).

Only hours which are actually served count toward the minimum hours listed above. Members serving in AmeriCorps are not able to claim hours for vacation, sick time, holidays, personal time, etc.

Members operate on a 40 hours per week schedule at the host site. This schedule accounts for members to take time off for short vacations, holidays, and sick time as needed.

**Time Off**
Members that wish to take time off must first clear it with their direct supervisor at their host site. For more than 1 week off, members must inform VHCB AmeriCorps staff that they will be away. For 2 weeks or more off, members must also gain advance approval from the VHCB AmeriCorps Director or Program Coordinator. *Timesheets must still be submitted during time off. If the member will be off during a time that a timesheet is due, it should be submitted in advance.* Program should be notified if any time off will conflict with training or reporting dates, regardless of length of time off.

**Time Tracking**
Member’s time is tracked through an online portal known as OnCorps. Member’s time must be approved by the Direct Supervisor and reviewed by VHCB Program Staff. VHCB AmeriCorps staff will regularly review the members’ hours and give regular updates to members, however, it is the responsibility of the member to regulate hours so as to not fall behind. Members are required to
maintain an average of 36 hours per week served. If a member falls behind in hours, the program may require the member and/or host site to submit a written plan to catch up. If the member is unable or not willing to catch up on hours, the program may exit the member for cause.

In the event that a member is far ahead in hours, the program may also request a plan from the member and/or host site to get back on target. While there is no maximum number of hours that a member may serve, it is not in the interest of the Program for members to burn out, nor wish to leave the program early once hour requirements have been met.

**Early Exit**

Members that do not complete the required hours, discontinue serving before their end date, or otherwise leave the program early will be exited as follows:

**FOR CAUSE:** The member is exited for reasons within his/her control, for unsafe or poor behavior, or other breach of the Member Agreement. The member will not receive any portion of the education award. This reflects poorly on the member’s performance. Examples of “cause” are leaving the AmeriCorps program to accept an employment opportunity, to attend school without completing hours, to relocate, due to a breach of the Member Agreement, undisclosed criminal history appears on member’s record, etc.

**FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** When exited for compelling personal circumstances, the member may be eligible for a pro-rated education award. In order to receive a pro-rated education award, the member must have served at least 15% of their total hours. Examples circumstances beyond the member’s control:

- The member has a serious injury, illness, or other personal health issue that effects their service
- 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 and only if the VHCB Director deems that circumstance to be compelling.
Types of Service Hours

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

**Training:** The member 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 a member may claim up to 10% of hours as fundraising activities, fundraising activities are limited in the following manner:
AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of your program's service activities. Some examples:

- 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.

**Other Eligible Hours**

In addition to hours the members serves at the host site, the member will also claim hours for various activities during their active service term required or allowed by the VHCB AmeriCorps Program, SerVermont, or CNCS. Examples include: Program initiatives such as the Independent Service Project, R.A.R.E. Opportunity, Book Club, and Peer Site Visits; time to complete required paperwork and reporting; optional trainings and events to aid in member development, site visits from AmeriCorps staff, disaster relief deployment, etc.
Teleserving

Teleserving, or telecommuting, is the concept of serving from home or another location outside of the provided office space. Teleserving is not a formal, universal member benefit. Rather, it is an alternative method of meeting the needs of the AmeriCorps Position when possible. AmeriCorps positions are meant to provide direct services, and teleserving should be used minimally and only when necessary. VHCB AmeriCorps and/or the HSO have the right to refuse to make teleserving available to a Member and to terminate a teleserving arrangement at any time. Members are not required to teleserve, and adequate office space to perform the duties of the position should be available to members. A member has the right to refuse to teleserve if the option is made available.

Service Benefits and Hours: The AmeriCorps Member’s, benefits, enrollment status, living allowance, and service responsibilities will not change when teleserving. Members are expected to adhere to AmeriCorps and Program rules, regulations, and responsibilities while teleserving. This includes wearing the AmeriCorps logo at all times while serving.

Eligibility and Limits: Members will be allowed to teleserve based on the suitability of their position and the ability of their supervisor to manage the member remotely. Allowing teleservice is at the discretion of the HSO and Supervisor, and the VHCB AmeriCorps Program Director. The HSO may have telecommuting policies that add additional guidelines and restrictions which the member should adhere to. In cases that the policies don’t align, the Member should follow the AmeriCorps Program Policy.

AmeriCorps Service is meant to be direct and have regular interaction with the community. Regularly scheduled teleservice is limited to a maximum of one day per week. Regularly scheduled teleservice must be approved by the host site and the VHCB AmeriCorps Program. Irregular teleservice to accommodate poor travel conditions, illness, temporary loss of office space (cleaning or remodeling, etc), or other circumstances that warrant teleserving do not have a cap. Serving “in the field” or attending trainings and events is not considered teleserving. In cases of inclement weather or other hazardous travel, or in any other instance in which in-person service would be unsafe, Members may teleserve as necessary, and should never be expected to travel or operate in unsafe conditions.

Workspace and Equipment: The Member must have a suitable workspace and necessary equipment and supplies to serve remotely. At minimum, the Member must be able to be contacted by phone and email, and contact information must be shared with the HSO and VHCB AmeriCorps Program Staff. The HSO may provide specific tools/equipment for the Member to perform duties at their discretion. When the member uses their own equipment, the member is responsible for maintenance and repair of equipment. Any HSO materials taken home should be kept in the designated service area at home and not be made accessible to others. Confidential files and information should not be removed from the HSO office space and only accessed electronically using a secure process. Members must be available to remotely attend meetings deemed necessary by the HSO or Program.

Communication: Members must be available by phone and email during teleservice hours. Members must check in with their supervisor or designated representative of the HSO at the beginning of their teleservice with a plan of what the Member will be doing. Members must again check out at the conclusion of their teleservice with an outline of the day’s activities.
Contracted Term

Members are contracted to serve beginning with a service “start date” through a contracted “end date.” In addition to the target and minimum hours commitment, members are agreeing to be available to directly serve with the Program and/or with the host site for the entirety of the contracted term.

Members have a maximum of one year to complete the required number of hours at which point, members are no longer eligible to serve. If hours are not complete, the member cannot be exited successfully nor receive the education award.

Contract Amendments

As unforeseen circumstances may arise over the course of the service term, it may be possible to amend your contract with VHCB AmeriCorps to end early or extend your service. When amending contract dates, a member must still serve the contracted number of service hours. The Host Site Organization and the VHCB AmeriCorps Program must be in agreement with the member’s request for a contract amendment.

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—

1. Gain approval from the member’s direct supervisor and/or host site.
2. Submit a written letter to the VHCB AC Program Director, at least sixty (60) days prior to the requested amended end date. The letter should list the new end date, the reason for request, and be signed by both the member and the site supervisor.
3. The VHCB AC Program Director will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions. If the VHCB AC Program Director approves the request, the member, supervisor, and VHCB AC Program Director will be required to sign a contract amendment.

Examples of reasonable amendments to shorten term of service:

- A member may decide to begin Grad school and need to leave the AmeriCorps position 3 weeks early to attend.
- A significant family vacation falls at the end of a member’s service and the member is well ahead of hours and the host site will not need the member’s service during the requested amended period.

Members understand that they may forfeit any living allowance payments due to them after the new, earlier end date, and they must complete the hours requirement for their position type by the new contracted end date.

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 the start date then the member should—
1. Gain approval from the member’s direct supervisor and/or HSO.
2. Submit a written letter to the VHCB AC Program Director, at least sixty 60 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.
3. VHCB AC Program Director will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions. If the VHCB AC Program Director approves the request, the member, supervisor and VHCB Program Director will be required to sign a contract amendment.

Members understand that the living allowance that they may not receive additional living allowance payments over the maximum living allowance amount.

Examples of reasonable amendments to lengthen a term of service:

- A member may have to unexpectedly take time off to care for an ill child or parent.
- A special project is happening at the host site, and both host site and the member would like to have the member participate

A request to amend the contract is not necessary if the new end date will not affect pay periods (within two weeks of contracted end date). Instead, a standard contract amendment included in the exit paperwork should be used.

**Suspension**

If unforeseen circumstances arise, members may be placed in “suspension” at the request of the member or the Program. The time that a member is in suspension does not count toward the one-year limit. While in suspension, the member’s living allowance payments will pause. Once a member returns to service, the member’s circumstance and remaining hours will be evaluated and a contract amendment will be made.

Suspension of a term may also be utilized for the following:

- If issues arise between a member and host site, or member and program, and additional time is required to address the situation.
- If a member requests to take extended time off for personal reasons
- The program deems that the member is not acting in accordance to the member agreement or within the Programs’ code of conduct
- The member needs time off to address personal or family health issues, including mental health.
- The member is not or is unable to actively serve in a full-time capacity
- Service duties at the host site cannot be completed – for example, a loss of funding, disaster or emergency, or unexpected change in staffing.
Living Allowance

These are the terms used to describe the financial benefit that members receive from the AmeriCorps program they participate in. The living allowance that AmeriCorps members receive is not considered to be a salary, or an hourly wage. Under the law that established AmeriCorps, a member is not an employee, and will not receive a wage or salary.

For the 2021-2022 program year, members will receive the following maximum living allowance amount

- Full-time members: $20,400
- Half-time members: $10,800
- Quarter-time members: $5,400

The amounts listed above are gross amounts and do 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 will be based upon federal and state law based on information provided by the member on IRS W-4 form you provide.

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 may be suspended and will not receive a living allowance during this time.

Your living allowance will be issued via direct deposit every other Thursday. The living allowance is not based on actual hours served in a given pay period and thus will not fluctuate based on the number of hours served per week - It must not be paid on an hourly basis or be tied to hours served. Instead it is divided evenly by the number of pay periods during the members contracted term of service. It is designed to help members meet their living needs while in service. However, if you fall behind in hours are seem to be unable to successfully complete the number of service hours needed to fulfill your contracted term of service by the last day, the Program Director will work with you to modify your schedule to get back on track. Though your living allowance may not be affected, you are at risk of not receiving the Education Award by not completing the number of required hours.

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 VHCB 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 within 2 business days of its due date, VHCB 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. The member will be reinstated once all timesheets have been submitted to VHCB AC in full. Repeat late timesheets will initiate a corrective action plan.
Member Requirements and Expectations

Background Checks
All members must submit to a National Service Criminal History Check. All members are subject to an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal History Check, Sex Offender Registry Check, State Repository checks from Vermont and their state of residence, and Adult/Child Abuse Check through the Vermont Agency on Human Services.

Members may not begin service until the National Service Criminal History Check has cleared. Program staff will notify the member and supervisor once the results have been received and the member is cleared to serve.

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.

VHCB AmeriCorps Members are subject to redo any background checks that are done incorrectly, have delayed results, or are otherwise warranted.

Dress Code/AmeriCorps Logo
Members are expected to wear the AmeriCorps logo at all times when in service. This includes while at your office/usual service space, while attending VHCB AmeriCorps events, and when out in the field/community. VHCB AmeriCorps provides members with shirts, sweatshirts, patches, pins, stickers, and nametags.

While members are welcome to sport the AmeriCorps logo while not serving, they should keep in mind that they are representing AmeriCorps while doing so and should therefore refrain from any AmeriCorps prohibited activities when wearing the AmeriCorps logo.

The member being identified as an AmeriCorps member while providing service is essential to the sustainability and longevity of the VHCB AmeriCorps program per the instructions of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Encourage your member to commit to wearing the AmeriCorps Member uniform during all community service outreach hours and during regular service hours.

Attire policies may vary by host Site. Members should adhere to the attire policies of their host sites but also ensure that AmeriCorps uniform expectations are being met.

Adequate safety clothing and equipment should be worn while on any type of construction, environmental, or maintenance duty. Work boots and protective gear must be worn on all assignments that put the member at any level of increased risk of physical harm.
Newsletters/Story of the Week

VHCB AmeriCorps collects and publishes a “story of the week” and produces a newsletter. Each member is expected to submit 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.

Mandated Reporting

Members are considered Mandated Reporters, which means they must report any cases of abuse witnessed by the Members. Members are required to take the online Mandated Reporter training session through the Vermont Department of children and families, and submit a certificate of completion to the Program. The webinar can be accessed at http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated.
**Program Benefits and Resources**

**Child Care**
Full time AmeriCorps Members are eligible to apply for Childcare benefits. Benefits are based on enrollment status AND income eligibility.

For information on eligibility, contact AmeriCorps Program Staff.

**Health Care**
Members serving in a full-time capacity are eligible for health care provided through VHCB AmeriCorps. The premium is paid entirely by the program; there is no additional cost to members to be enrolled in AmeriCorps Health Plan. Members must accept the AmeriCorps provided health insurance if they do not have access to other health care coverage. More information on the VHCB Health Care plan can be found in section 7.

**Travel, Mileage and Accommodations**
Costs associated with travel required by VHCB 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 IRS rate set for mileage reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement between service sites or otherwise required by the host site is the responsibility of a member’s host site. Host sites will also use the IRS reimbursement rate. Mileage reimbursement cannot be paid for travel to and from the member’s first daily service site – i.e. regular commute travel.

Mileage reimbursement must be turned in to VHCB AmeriCorps within 30 days of the travel, or the member will risk losing the reimbursement.

More information can be found in section 4.
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 or oversight to 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.
Press Guidelines

1. Please describe us as Vermont Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps.

2. We work in partnership with twenty-nine non-profit housing and conservation entities statewide, and we and they in turn, work with other community partners such as organizations, schools, groups, etc. While good publicity is always helpful in spreading the word about AmeriCorps, it is important that the community collaboration gets the primary focus of the publicity.

3. Please email all written materials to VHCB staff for pre-approval whenever possible. Send a copy of printed materials to 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.

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.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2009

Contact:
Kate Stephenson
kate@yestermorrow.org
802.496.5545

Yestermorrow Design/Build School Welcome Community Outreach Coordinator

Warren, VT – The Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Warren is thrilled to announce the addition of its newest member, José Galarza. José is Yestermorrow’s new Community Outreach Coordinator through the VHCB AmeriCorps program for the coming year. He will be working on a helping Yestermorrow reach out to the local community, coordinate class building projects with community clients, represent Yestermorrow at conferences and events, and lead outreach and marketing efforts. On a hiatus from professional architecture practice, José arrives to the Mad River Valley after designing an assortment of iconic buildings for two well known and highly acclaimed architecture firms in Europe and the United States. Before that, he earned his Master’s of Architecture degree at the University of Texas at Austin; and, concurrently apprenticed for a carpentry shop, producing high end custom pieces and collaborating with various design build and art installation projects. This work laid the foundation for his current position, where he hopes to draw interest to Yestermorrow from potential students with similar backgrounds, as well to facilitate the building of class projects with future clients. He will also be doing his part to support VHCB Americorps’ mission to enhance the welfare and stability of Vermont’s communities, environment and its citizens through education, skill development, participation, and achievement.

If you if you have any ideas about potential community projects or partnerships that the school should pursue, you can reach him at Yestermorrow: 802-496-5545 or by email at jose@yestermorrow.org.

###

Yestermorrow Design/Build School, located in Warren, Vermont, was founded in 1980 on the belief that the best built environment depends on the joint cooperation of designers, builders and homeowners. The school’s goal is to empower people to express their values and lifestyle through an integrated design/build process, and to foster a self-awareness that reconnects people to their communities, their natural environment and to each other.

Yestermorrow’s 1-day to 3-week hands-on courses are taught by top architects, builders, and craftspeople from across the country. Classes are for people of all ages and experience levels, from novice to professional. Yestermorrow also offers three certificate programs: the Certificate in Sustainable Building and Design and the Natural Building Intensive and Woodworking Intensive. For more information about Yestermorrow, please visit our website at www.yestermorrow.org.
VHCB AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

Forms and 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 VHCB AmeriCorps staff is 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.

All paperwork and required forms, except for those submitted electronically, can be downloaded from our website at www.vhcb.org/americorps

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
- Intent To Commit Form
- Member Agreement/Contract with original signature
- Signed Position Description
- Enrollment Form (through MyAmeriCorps)
- W-4
- VT W-4
- I-9 with original signature
- Picture Driver’s License
- Direct Deposit Sheet
  - Includes or proof of account
- VHCB AmeriCorps Program Enrollment Form
  - Must have high school info and original signature
  - Copy of License
  - Proof of vehicle insurance and registration
- 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 MyAmeriCorps)

**Criminal Background Check**
- FBI Criminal History Check
- State Criminal History Check
- Sex Offender Registry check
- Abuse Registry check release form
- Child Abuse Registry check
- Adult Abuse Registry check
**VHCB AmeriCorps**

**Mid-Year (Full-Time and Half-Time Members Only)**
- Mid-Term Member Performance Review signed by both ACM & supervisor
- Quarterly Activities Reports Qtrs.: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Quarterly Volunteer Logs Qtrs.: 1, 2, 3, 4

**Closing**
- Exit Form (in MyAmeriCorps)
- Member Agreement 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
- ISP Log & Reflection
- Book Reviews
- R.A.R.E. Opportunity forms
- Evaluations
Timesheet

To document your service hours, you must submit a completed **VHCB AC Timesheet every other week**. Your service hour weeks will start on Sunday and the “Week Ending” date is Friday. The timesheet should be submitted on the final day of service in a two week period (normally on Friday unless the member does not serve on Fridays – in which the timesheet is submitted earlier) to your site supervisor for approval.

***If you do not fill out and submit your Timesheet on a bi-weekly basis with the required information and/or fall behind on your hours, you put the continued funding for the VHCB AC in jeopardy. The timesheet is the primary source of documentation for VHCB AC 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 within two business days of it’s due date, it will be assumed that you are not actively serving and you will be placed in suspension until the approved timesheets have been submitted to VHCB AC in full.**

**Daily Description of Activities**

Each day **must** contain specific information covering the following:

- A brief description of the **allowable** activity(ies) occurred
- The number of hours served per day. Please only record hours to the **nearest quarter hour**.
- Any other information that would verify these service hours

Travel time up to 3 hours each way (to and from) statewide and other trainings may be counted as training hours. **Regular commuting time to and from the service site may not be counted.** Driving time from your Host Site to another work site may be counted. Lunch should not be counted if a lunch break is taken. If you serve through lunch, these hours may be counted.

Full–time members should be scheduled to serve approximately 40 hours per week, and averaging at least 36 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 your hours are complete (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 http://vt.oncorpsreports.com/. (It would be a good idea to bookmark this page)
2. Select the appropriate program year: **2021-2022**
3. Select “AmeriCorps Member” under VHCB 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 direct 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 Ashley/Francis; or send the timesheet back to the member for revision. Ashley/Francis 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.
- The time sheet should be submitted no later than the last day of service in the period.
- Contact Ashley or Francis with any questions or concerns.
Timesheet Activity Descriptions

Activity Description Do’s:

1. Add a description for each day you claim AmeriCorps Hours.
2. Be brief, concise, and clear in your activity descriptions.
3. Describe activities in a manner that someone that doesn’t understand anything about your position will be able to know what you did.
4. Avoid any descriptors that may be misconstrued as a prohibited or otherwise unallowable activity
   a. Example: if you collected and sorted donated goods for clients at a shelter, list as “collected and processed donated clothing items for shelter guests”. If you write “accepted donations” it may appear to someone that you were soliciting monetary donations for the shelter.
   b. Example: “checked email” or “updated facebook” is not clear that it was service-related tasks vs your own email/facebook. A better descriptor would be “reviewed and responded to service email” or “added program photos to host site social media”
   c. “Organized desk and service space” is okay, “cleaned office” is not clearly service related.
5. ISP: Define the activity and that it is ISP related. i.e. “Mentored student through Rainbow Readers for ISP”
6. Define ALL acronyms – either in an initial description or in the comments box
7. Please use individual’s position titles not their proper name (i.e. “weekly meeting with supervisor”)

Activity Description Don’ts:

1. Do NOT use these words/phrases: Work, Marketing, Administrative, front desk, advocated, solicited, fundraiser, names of private businesses, names of individuals served.
2. Do not use vague descriptors that allow room for uncertainty regarding unallowable activities. Examples of poor descriptions:
   a. “Staffing shelter”
   b. “administrative tasks”
   c. “serving in office”
3. Use generic wording around fundraising – all fundraising or donation gathering should be clearly defined by activity and purpose.
4. Do not enter personal information, confidential information, or irrelevant information in the timesheet.
5. Do not add insignificant activity or time not accounted for into timesheet – i.e. “dropped off check on way to field site”; “15 minute break to take a personal call”; “sat at front desk”.

Serve. Experience. Lead
The following are poor examples of timesheet descriptions:

1. **Guest Intakes, took out recycling, trained new volunteers on shelter meal prep, facilitated off site group meeting and dropped off check on the way.**
   “Dropped off check” and “took out recycling” is not a significant and necessary description

2. **Staffed shelter, trained 3 new volunteers, sorted mail, accepted donations, group meeting**
   “sorted mail”, and “group meeting” are not clearly service related activities.
   “accepted donations” is not clear to know whether this is an allowable activity or not.

3. **Guest Intakes, volunteer training for meal prep, sorted guest mail, FWG meeting, met with Pam**
   Uses an undefined acronym, and first name of person rather than relevant role

The following is a good example of a timesheet description:

New guest intakes, meal prep and training new shelter volunteers, organized common space, delivered guest mail, accepted and sorted clothing donations for guests, facilitated Friday Women’s Group meeting, met with supervisor
# VT Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps

**Member**: HANNAH EPSTEIN  
**Site**: THC Natural Conservancy  
**Period**: 5/11/2020 - 5/24/2020

## Timesheet Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description/Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Total Daily Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon May 11</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Feedback on logo designs, writing Geecha BDR, Long Pond bird survey planning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue May 12</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Writing Geecha BDR</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>AmeriCorps resume workshop</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed May 13</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>All staff meeting, strategic planner meeting to prioritize actions</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>AmeriCorps education award workshop</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu May 14</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Potted garlic mustard and cleaned up trail at Williams Woods</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri May 15</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Maps for Geecha BDR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat May 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Excluded)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun May 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Excluded)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon May 18</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Check in meeting with supervisor, Geecha BDR, planning for Long Pond bird survey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue May 19</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Conservation Programs staff meeting, Stewardship staff meeting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed May 20</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Caught up on service emails, maps and photo report for Geecha BDR</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu May 21</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Prepped for field day tomorrow, maps for Geecha BDR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>TNF Writing Processivating Program manual review, development workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri May 22</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Potted garlic mustard at Raven Ridge, prepped equipment for field days next week</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat May 23</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Excluded)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun May 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Excluded)</td>
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**Totals:** 74.0

**Member Comments:**

BDR = Biodiversity Documentation Report for new conservation assessment project  
TNC = The Nature Conservancy

### History

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<th>Time</th>
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<th>User Type</th>
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<td>Signed</td>
<td>05/22/2020</td>
<td>9:23PM</td>
<td>HANNAH EPSTEIN</td>
<td>AmeriCorps</td>
<td>BDR = Biodiversity Documentation Report for new conservation assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>05/22/2020</td>
<td>9:27AM</td>
<td>Lynn McHale</td>
<td>Site Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>06/09/2020</td>
<td>3:27PM</td>
<td>Andrea Swanson</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**AmeriCorps Member:** HANNAH EPSTEIN  
**User Type:** Site Supervisor  
**Date Submitted:** 5/22/2020 9:23:50 PM  
**Date Approved:** 5/9/2020 9:27:00 AM  
**Date Reviewed:**
# VT Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps

## Timesheet Details

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description/Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon May 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Entered)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue May 26</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued developing our AmeriCorps portfolio. Practice preparing for our Homeowner Resource Workshop and sent out additional notices to AmeriCorps members as well as CHF staff.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed May 27</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued preparing the AmeriCorps portfolio. Practice preparing for the Homeowner Resource Workshop and sent out email to all participants, as well as a resource guide.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu May 28</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued developing our AmeriCorps portfolio. Practice preparing for our Homeowner Resource Workshop. Conducted the workshop the evening giving homeowners resources during the COVID19 pandemic on mortgage relief options.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri May 29</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued developing our AmeriCorps portfolio. Sent out a satisfaction survey to those attending the homeowner resource workshop.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat May 30</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Entered)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun May 31</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Entered)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon Jun 1</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued developing our AmeriCorps portfolio. Reviewed and made a plan for what was needed for the Understanding Credit Workshop, as well as began to create the sign up schedule for counseling appointments.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Reviewed and organized materials for the Understanding Credit Workshop and items needing to be completed, i.e. appointment scheduling.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue Jun 2</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling. Continued developing our AmeriCorps portfolio.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Reviewed and organized materials for the Understanding Credit Workshop and items needing to be completed, i.e. appointment scheduling.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed Jun 3</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Addressed letters and for the final ISP Understanding Credit Workshop review and met to review the final workshop presentation.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu Jun 4</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Co Hosted the Service Learning Understanding Credit Workshop.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri Jun 5</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Scheduled individuals for their one on one counseling appointments for our homeownership program. Our homeowners look to obtain our homeway certificate which requires counseling.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>Co Hosted the Service Learning Understanding Credit Workshop.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Jun 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>(No Time Entered)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Jun 7</td>
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**Totals:**

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**History**

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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>05/06/2020</td>
<td>12:22 PM</td>
<td>Romana Kurova</td>
<td>AmeriCorps Member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>05/12/2020</td>
<td>2:56 PM</td>
<td>Brian Beers</td>
<td>Site Supervisor 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>05/12/2020</td>
<td>7:33 PM</td>
<td>Arthur Wells</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td></td>
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**AmeriCorps Member**

- Site Supervisor 1
- Site Supervisor 2
- Site Supervisor 3
- Program Director
Mileage and Expense Reimbursement

To request Mileage reimbursement from VHCB AmeriCorps, please use the electronic form found on our website.

VHCB AmeriCorps Member Mileage and expense reimbursement requests should be made as soon as possible, on the day of when possible. All mileage and expense claims must be completed and submitted to the AmeriCorps office within 30 days of the travel or date of expense. Mileage submitted later than 30 days may not be reimbursed. The timesheet can be easily submitted online from any device.

VHCB AmeriCorps reimburses members at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate. At the time of this writing the rate is $.56 per mile. The mileage rate is normally updated on the 1st of the year.

What can be claimed as mileage?

This form can be used to claim any mileage accrued for VHCB AmeriCorps sponsored trainings and events. This includes all required trainings and events, up to two peer site visits, and any other travel that VHCB AmeriCorps requests of the member. This form is also used to claim reimbursement for expenses incurred by the member that the Program has agreed to reimburse.

Any travel required of the member by the host organization will be reimbursed by the host site and should be directly submitted to the member’s supervisor or appropriate person at the organization to handle reimbursements. Examples of travel that should be reimbursed by the host site when using your personal vehicle include: transporting clients, traveling to a field site, making a delivery for the host site, picking up supplies or gear for service related purposes, attending trainings or events required or sponsored by the host site. Please check with your supervisor for the mileage reimbursement policy and how-to at your site.

Please note that the host organization must reimburse members at the current IRS rate. This may be different than the organization’s policy for reimbursing other staff.

Carpooling

As stewards of the environment, VHCB AmeriCorps strongly encourages carpooling whenever possible. If you would like assistance in setting up carpooling to AmeriCorps events, please contact the AmeriCorps Leader or utilize the VHCB AmeriCorps listserv (vhcb-americorps@googlegroups.com) to coordinate with fellow members!
# VHCB AmeriCorps Reimbursement Form

**Current Mileage Rate:** $0.56 as of January 1, 2023

**Name:**
- First Name
- Last Name

**Email Address:**
- [email]

**Submission Date:**
- [Date]

## Mileage Claim

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<th>Payment Requested</th>
<th>Direct Trip Mileage</th>
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## Expense Reimbursement

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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Mileage:**
- [Mileage Claimed]

**Mileage Reimbursement:**
- [Reimbursement Amount]

**Accredited Experience Received Here:**
- [Number of Hours]
  - [Description of Experience]

**Total Reimbursement:**
- [Total Reimbursement Amount]

**Member Signature:**
- [Signature]

---

*This form must be completed and submitted with all documentation for reimbursement. Failure to submit all required documentation may result in a delay in reimbursement. All expenses must be substantiated with original receipts.*
Member Portfolio

The end-of-term portfolio documents your term of service (think of it as your Legacy Manual). It is intended to be used as:

- A tool for reflection of your term of service;
- A resource for next year’s member;
- A resource for VHCB AmeriCorps (we read through portfolios to learn more about your experience and pull photos and quotes for marketing purposes);
- A resource for you to show potential future employers your accomplishments and important service work

What should the portfolio include?

You should make two copies: One for your site and incoming member - you will turn this copy in with your exit paperwork and, once we have reviewed them, we will give them to the new member/site; and one for you to keep for yourself.

It must include information that will be useful for the next year’s member to help them more quickly integrate themselves into the organization and community and get to know the available resources and major events. Information should include:

- **Community Contacts**: local agencies/service providers, businesses, media, parents, police, etc.
- **Volunteer and Donor Contacts**
- **Yearly Calendar of Events/Programming**: dates and description of annual events, fundraisers, programming, outreach/tableing venues, etc. and the role the member may have in that event
- **Copy of a completed Activity Report**: to be used as an example for the incoming member to see how you documented your activities for us
- **Photos**: digital, if you got ‘em!
- **Other**: information that will be helpful (info you wish you knew when you first started)

Optional information to include:

- **Copies** of flyers, brochures, resource booklets, newsletters, databases, reports and other materials you may have produced
- **Personal Reflection**: In the form of written narrative, prose, song, etc.
  - What have you accomplished and/or learned?
  - How do you believe this experience will help you in the future?
  - What have you given of yourself to others?
  - What have others given of themselves to you?
  - Describe a particularly difficult situation. How did you deal with it? Were you a leader? How would you approach it differently if it were to happen again?
  - How has being in AmeriCorps impacted/changed you?
Other Required Paperwork

All forms can be viewed/downloaded at:

Incident Report Form

Please fill out this form in the case of any on-site incident, physical or other. This form should be completed and returned to VHCB AmeriCorps within 36 hours of the incident.

On-site Orientation Form

To assure that you have been properly orientated at your host site, we ask that you complete this form with your supervisor and send it in the VHCB AmeriCorps within one week of your orientation.

Mid-Term/End-of-Year Performance Review

You will need to submit a Performance Review of your service twice over the course of your service term – once mid-term, and one at the end of the year. This review is completed by both you and supervisor. This is a tool to reflect on your service with your supervisor, but should not be used in place of weekly check-ins. There should be no surprises when filling out this form. See Following pages.

Review of Site Supervisor

This form is only required once upon completion of your term, but it may be submitted to VHCB AmeriCorps at other points in the year. We provide it over the course of the year as a tool in sorting through any issues that may arise your site.

Book Reviews

Book reviews should be submitted electronically to the AmeriCorps Leader with the book review form and a one page typed thoughtful response to the book. Your review should include: What you learned from the book, why you would/would not recommend it to other members, and how you found it relevant to your service. AmeriCorps staff will review the report. Only once you’ve received approval from AmeriCorps staff may you claim hours for book review in your timesheet.

Independent Service Project

This form should be submitted by the end of your service year. You must document and have validated the hours you served for the project and submit a one to two page reflection on the project.
Final Member Performance Review

Instructions

1. Member completes self-review and gives completed review to supervisor July 16.
2. Supervisor responds and adds to member review, and rates the performance in each category.
3. Both supervisor and member meet to discuss review.
4. Completed and signed evaluation is returned to VHCB AmeriCorps Staff by July 30th.

Member Name: _____________________________________________

Member Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Supervisor Name: __________________________________________

Supervisor Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

_______________________________________________________________________
1. **QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF SERVICE**: accuracy, timeliness, organization, attention to detail and results, productivity, pace, willingness to take on additional responsibility, time management, etc.

   **Member:**

   **Supervisor:** [ ] unacceptable [ ] needs improvement [ ] good [ ] very good/notable [ ] exceptional

   **Comments:**

2. **TECHNICAL UNDERSTANDING and PROBLEM SOLVING**: project knowledge and understanding, technical skills, understanding of organization mission and procedures, ability to follow instructions, contributes ideas for improvement and exhibit innovation, etc.

   **Member:**

   **Supervisor:** [ ] unacceptable [ ] needs improvement [ ] good [ ] very good/notable [ ] exceptional

   **Comments:**

3. **DEPENDABILITY & MOTIVATION**: attendance, punctuality, reliability, communication, cooperation, positivity, teamwork, self-motivation, attitude, etc.

   **Member:**

   **Supervisor:** [ ] unacceptable [ ] needs improvement [ ] good [ ] very good/notable [ ] exceptional

   **Comments:**
4. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: describe the skills learned/expanded in this position, training received, and motivation to take advantage of professional growth opportunities.

Member:

Supervisor:

5. AMERICORPS PROGRAM COMMITMENTS: training and events attendance, use of program initiatives (book club, peer site visits, ISP), collaborative efforts with other members, meeting program requirements (reporting and paperwork), and other ways the member has engaged or enhanced the program.

Member:

Supervisor:

6. FACTORS SUPPORTING OR CHALLENGING EFFECTIVE WORK Identify factors that have helped or prohibited the member being effective in their role

Member:

Supervisor:

SUPERVISOR ONLY

1. HOURS FULFILLMENT AND PERFORMANCE

- Overall, Member has performed satisfactorily: _____Yes _____No
- Is the member on track to complete service hours them by their end date? _____yes _____no
- Please share a highlight or favorite memory from your member’s service:
Book Review Form

Member Name: ___________________________________________________________

You may read books from the VHCB AMERICORPS Book List without written approval. For the most up to date list of these books, please refer to our site. Otherwise, please contact Ashley Swasey for approval with a brief explanation of why you are choosing that book.

Title: _________________________________________________________________

Author: __________________________________________________________________

Your review should consist of a three paragraph summary addressing the following:

1) Brief synopsis of the book
2) How it relates to your service
3) Your opinion/recommendation of the book

FT members are limited to 6 book reviews and PT members are limited to 3 book reviews. You are limited to no more than one book review per month. Up to 10 training hours can be claimed on your time sheet after approval from VHCB AmeriCorps staff. Please list your hours below:

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th># of Hours</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review:

[Approved] [Not Approved]
Member Information:

Full Name: _____________________________ SS#: ______________________ DOB: __________

Current Address: ________________________________________________________________

Phone Number: _______________________ Host Site Phone Number: ____________________

Position Title: __________________________ Sponsoring Organization: _________________

Supervisor: ______________________________

Member Slot Type: __________ Member Start Date: _______________

Average hours serve per day/Average hours served per week: __________________________

Information about the Incident:

When & where did the incident happen?

Date/Time: ______________________________

Location: ______________________________

Witnesses: ______________________________

Describe the incident that occurred. Include what directly caused injury and the events leading up to the accident:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Was the activity that the member was doing at the time of this incident part of their position description? Yes: ______ No: ______
If relevant, was the member trained to operate the equipment being used at the time of the incident? Yes: _____  No: ______

Please explain the type of training received (e.g. 8-hour Safety Course) and any certifications received: __________________________________________________________

What action was taken?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Describe the injury and the part of the body injured:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Was first-aid administered? ______________________________________________________

Was medical action taken? If so, explain and list any medications administered, and/or costs incurred:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Name of Hospital where Member received treatment: _____________________________
Name of Physician: ____________________________________________________________

Will follow-up medical attention/therapy be required? If so, what?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Did the injury disrupt Member’s ability to continue serving at Host site?
Yes: _____  No: ______

How many days of service has the member missed as a result of injury?

____________________________________________________________________________

Has the member returned back serving at Host Site?
Yes: _____  No: ______

If yes, please provide date: __________________________

I attest that the information provided in this report is true to the best of my knowledge.

______________________________________________
Signature

______________________________________________
Date
Member: ______________________________

**Description and Reflection of Independent Service:**
Please attach a one to two page reflection on your service project that includes the following:

- Description of the service project – what the project was, organizations you served with, anyone you collaborated with.
- Results and impact of project
- What did you learn or gain from the project?

**Log of Independent Service Hours:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Description of Activity:</th>
<th>Number of Hours*</th>
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**Total Hours Served:** ________________

Member Signature _______________________________ Date ________________

Authorizing Official Name _______________________________ Position/Title _______________________________

Authorizing Official Signature _______________________________ Date ________________

*A total minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 hours should be committed to the Independent Service Project.
VHCB AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

Progress Reporting

Section 5
2021-2022 Reporting Deadlines

**January 7th:** 1st Qtr. Member Progress Report (beginning of service – Dec. 31)

**April 1st:** 2nd Qtr. Member Progress Report (Jan. 1 – Mar. 31)

**July 1st:** 3rd Qtr. Member Progress Report (Apr. 1 – Jun. 30)

**August 5th:** Final Member Progress Report (July 1- Sept. 30)
2020-21 Performance Goals

CNCS Approved Primary Performance Measures

Housing Placement Services

2,500 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless will have greater access to safe, affordable housing opportunities through housing placement and accessibility services provided by ACMs. Services will include housing identification, applications assistance, referrals, back rent and security deposit disbursements, and home sharing coordination.

450 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless, will transition into safe, affordable housing as a result of ACM services.

Living Independently and Residential Services

ACM’s will provide companionship, resource facilitation, food access, transportation, volunteer matching, and housing support to 500 individuals, including 150 individuals who are Homebound, Older Adults, and/or living with a disability.

75 individuals who are Homebound, Older Adults, and/or living with a disability will report increased social support due to member’s services.

Improving Lands and Habitats through Environmental Stewardship

ACM’s will implement invasive species management, trail maintenance, boundary marking, easement monitoring, and tree planting/maintenance on 3,000 acres of parks and public lands. 2,000 acres of land will be assessed as improved according to the entities land management plan.

AmeriCorps Members will implement invasive species management; create, improve, and maintain access points; grow, plant, and maintain trees; remove debris; create and repair educational and safety signage; and improve trail accessibility. 100 Miles of trails will receive stewardship efforts, and 65 miles will be assessed as improved.
Environmental, Energy, and Outdoor Education

ACMs will deliver education on environmentally-conscious practices and outdoor recreation, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, sustainable agriculture, and public land access and recreational opportunities to 900 individuals resulting in greater knowledge and appreciation for the natural environment and how people can help conserve energy and care for natural eco-systems. Education will be delivered through school programs, public programs, day camps, home visits, and service learning projects. Only Individuals surveyed for behavior changes may be counted.

As a result, 600 Individuals will report a change in behavior or intention to change behavior toward more environmentally-conscious practices.

Additional Secondary Program Performance Measures

Financial Literacy Services

ACMs will provide financial literacy services including credit repair education and counseling, household budgeting, foreclosure prevention/intervention, home ownership education, outreach, and development and distribution of educational materials to at least 250 economically disadvantaged individuals. 50 individuals will demonstrate improved financial literacy knowledge.

Housing Units Made Available

ACMs will develop, repair, or otherwise make available 150 affordable housing units for low income individuals and families, including older adults and people with disabilities. 100 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless and near-homeless will remain in, transition into, or diminish risk of losing safe, affordable housing as a result of ACM services.

Food Access and Nutritional Services

ACM’s will implement community gardens, provide emergency food, deliver meals, support food pantries, and provide nutritional services and education to 2000 individuals.

Energy Efficiency

ACMs will improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of 100 housing units and structures through weatherization, retrofits and other energy efficiency measures.
Volunteer Mobilization

VHCB AC members will recruit, train, supervise, evaluate and recognize 1000 community volunteers so that these volunteer efforts help to further the missions of VHCB AC’s sponsoring organizations. Members will recruit at least 700 volunteers, and will manage at least 800 volunteers. The volunteers mobilized by VHCB AmeriCorps members will serve the equivalent of 5 full-time employees/10,400 hours of volunteer service at member host sites.

Capacity Building

In addition to volunteer mobilization, members involved in capacity building activities will expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of services, programs and their organizations. Activities may also leverage resources for programs and/or organizations so that lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations are achieved. Members will provide capacity building services for at least 25 organizations, will raise $5,000 worth of In-Kind or cash goods to support projects, and will improve 25 systems used by host sites such as information gathering, data tracking, organization outreach, community engagement, and internal communications. Note: AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of sponsors’ program services but may not raise funds for an organization's general operating expenses or endowment.

Member Development

100% of VHCB AmeriCorps Members will participate in VHCB AmeriCorps Member Development Initiatives which includes member training, program initiatives, and service learning. Upon successful completion of their AmeriCorps term, all graduating members will report improvement in at least 3 life skills needed to better secure employment and become productive, engaged community members.
Quarterly Progress Report Guidelines

The general member activities (or 'Performance Measures') you will report on are as follows. Many ACMs will report on more than one:

1. Housing Placement Services
2. Improving Lands and Habitats through Environmental Stewardship
3. Environmental, Energy, and Outdoor Education
4. Living Independently and Resident Services
5. Food Access and Nutritional Services
6. Financial Literacy Services
7. Housing Units Made Available
8. Energy Conservation
9. Volunteer Mobilization
10. Capacity Building
11. Member Development

Guidelines

There are two different reports you are required to submit:

1) Quarterly Progress Report- submitted online via EmailMeForm
2) Volunteer Log- submitted via email using an Excel template

Both of these reports are due in January, April, July, and end of term.

Progress Reporting:

You will complete and submit your Quarterly Progress Reports via EmailMeForm. You will be emailed a link per report to access the system. Progress Reports may be saved and returned to at a later time.

We report on two indicators of performance:

1. Outputs-represent program effort -the amount or units of services that members have completed, or the number of beneficiaries members have served.
2. Outcomes- refer to a change that has occurred in communities or in the lives of community beneficiaries or members.
Progress Report Guidelines:

1. **Be careful not to double count the same individual/entity for the same measure in succeeding quarters!** Progress reports are cumulative for the service year. Individuals, acres, or other entities should not be counted more than once in the same measure during the service term. For example, you can count 40 residents total that benefitted from your service work in quarter 1. In quarter 2, there were 4 new residents plus the previous 40 who benefitted. So, you would count only 4 new residents that benefitted in quarter 2.

2. **However! DO count the same individual for separate measures if they have received services in multiple measures.** For example, person A and B received emergency food services. Person A also received financial literacy services. You would count person A for both of those measures. You would not count either of those people again in quarter 2 for the same measure, but may count them in new measures.

3. **Data storage/retention** - You will use the data collected to report your activities performance, but you will not need to submit the data collection documents themselves (e.g. logs, rosters, pr/post tests, etc.). You should retain all data collection proof and documents at your site. Documents should be stored up to 7 years and made available to VHCB AmeriCorps should we need them for auditing purposes.

- **Great Story** - We supplement our numbers with qualitative impacts of members’ service. Please share anything that occurred during your term that was meaningful for you in some way. Perhaps you experienced a 'Wow!' moment or made a breakthrough with a client. Perhaps a family was housed in permanent housing, or a child went hiking for the first time. What is important to include in your "great story" is what your role was in whatever that meaningful event was (i.e. your impact).

  Do not use real names of individuals. We may share your story with the SerVermont and/or CNCS (you can use alias names). As always, we love photos; please obtain photo release forms for any youth or other vulnerable individuals that may appear in the photos (we have photo release forms available if you need them).

**Volunteer Log:**

- You should submit this at the same time that you submit the performance report.
- DO NOT double count the same person as a new volunteer. For each volunteer you log, you’ll need to note if this is a new volunteer. “New” means the first time you are listing them. They are still a “new” volunteer even if they have volunteered at your host site in the past.
- You SHOULD count their cumulative hours logged.
- The log asks members to identify the volunteer by age category. They do not need to ask anyone their age; they can simply make a reasonable guess.
- If another national service member (of the same or other program) participates in an event or type of service and is counting their hours on their respective timesheets, members should NOT count that member among their tally (they would not be considered a volunteer). If the member is not logging AmeriCorps hours or otherwise reporting it as part of their service term then they may be counted.
If you are listing more than 20 volunteers/groups, use multiple sheets. DO NOT add rows.

**Definition of Terms**
Always refer to the Performance Measure Instrument Packets for Definitions specific to that measure. Here are a few universal definitions:

**Baby Boomer**- Individuals who were born between 1946 and 1964.

**Beneficiary of service**- Anyone who has benefited from your service work, either directly or by virtue of your efforts.

**Children with special needs**- Children who are abused or neglected; in need of foster care; adjudicated youth; homeless youth; teen-age parents; and children in need of protective intervention in their homes.

**College student**- Number of individuals who are enrolled in a degree-seeking program at a community, professional, or technical college or university.

**Disadvantaged youth**- Anyone of age up to age 25 with exceptional or special needs (see definition above), or who are economically disadvantaged and for whom one or more of the following apply: 1) out-of-school, including out-of-school youth who are unemployed; 2) in or aging out of foster care; 3) limited English proficiency; 4) homeless or have run away from home; 5) at-risk to leave school without a diploma; and 6) former juvenile offenders or at risk of delinquency.

**Economically Disadvantaged**- Must be receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, SCHIP, Section 8 housing assistance OR have a poor credit score OR are at least 60 days behind on one or more personal/family accounts. The income criteria would follow the same federal and/or state criteria for each of the above-listed programs.

**Measure**- Each of the questions in the report and captures a unit of performance and/or output. For example, “number of adults receiving environmental education” is one measure.

**Service Learning**- A process whereby students learn and develop through active participation in organized service experiences that actually meet community needs. Service learning provides students opportunities to use their acquired skills and knowledge in real life situations in their communities; this enhances teaching by extending student learning into the community and helps foster a sense of caring for others. Examples include having an after-school group or class prepare a meal at a homeless shelter, or a college class providing GIS mapping services for a local park.

**Special characteristics**- Qualities that would identify a person with a population that may be in need of a particular service, such as person living with a mental or physical disability; veteran; older adult; homeless or near-homeless; disadvantaged youth; economically disadvantaged, etc.
Performance Measures Reporting

Housing Services

Output: CNCS Performance Measure O5 (Goal 1: Economic Opportunity: Housing)

Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing services.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Economically disadvantaged**: Must be receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: TANF, Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, SCHIP, Section 8 housing assistance OR have a poor credit score OR are at least 60 days behind on one or more personal/family accounts.

- **Homeless**: Individuals who spend the night in a place not intended for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a transitional housing facility. See the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development definition.

- **Individuals**: Each unique person who will be occupying the unit legally including adults and children but not unborn children.

- **Housing services**: Helps qualifying individuals find appropriate housing, find the resources to support use of appropriate housing, and assists individuals in accessing the appropriate housing. May or may not result in an actual placement. May also include hands-on housing development and repair activities. **Housing development** adds to the housing stock by building a new unit or substantially rehabilitating a unit that was either uninhabitable or soon would have become so. Involves replacing major systems such as the roof, the plumbing, the wiring, the foundation, or elevating the unit as required by a flood plain standard. **Housing repair** is a more modest level of physical work on the unit, such as weatherizing, painting, replacing appliances and removing safety hazards. **Service** requires an engagement with the individual in person, by phone, or through a web-interface. Pamphlets, brochures, or web-based information that does not involve a human interaction is not sufficient.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data

Count of **Individuals** as defined above benefitting from the housing service. Can only count each individual once during the program year even though it may be necessary to provide services to the individual more than once.

The data should be collected using a tracking mechanism appropriate for the type of service, which may include: CNCS-supported agency's administrative or call center records, referral logs, attendance logs or sign-in sheet, client tracking database, or other information management system.

The client tracking database should have unique IDs (e.g. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)).
Outcome: CNCS Performance Measure O11. (Goal 1: Economic Opportunity: Housing)

Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Economically disadvantaged**: Must be receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: TANF, Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, SCHIP, Section 8 housing assistance OR have a poor credit score OR are at least 60 days behind on one or more personal/family accounts.

- **Homeless**: Individuals who spend the night in a place not intended for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a transitional housing facility. See the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's definition.

- **Individuals**: Each unique person who will be occupying the unit legally including adults and children but not unborn children.

- **Safe, healthy, affordable housing**: Family or individual moves into a housing unit with secure tenure (lease or ownership document). Grantee certifies that the housing is safe and healthy, based on an inspection or other documentation. Grantee defines affordability and certifies that the housing unit is affordable to the household. See the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development's Affordable Housing page.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data

Count of individuals. Can only count each person once during the program year even though it may be necessary to provide services more than once.

An inspection report and certificate of occupancy, proof of residence such as lease or mortgage, or other verification from an external agency that the work was completed and is being occupied might be used.
Environmental Education

Output: CNCS Performance Measure EN3 (Goal 1: Environmental Stewardship: Awareness and Stewardship)

Number of individuals receiving education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices.

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. Grantees are encouraged to utilize service learning when possible. Environmental topics should relate to real conditions in the community being served.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect 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. Only individuals that are surveyed may be counted.

Sign-in or attendance sheets from education/training sessions when possible. Tracking needs to enable unduplicated count when possible.

Outcome: CNCS Performance Measure EN3.2 (Goal 1: Environmental Stewardship: Awareness and Stewardship)

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.
Definition of Key Terms

- **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 Data

Members should utilize surveys 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 grant year. In developing targets, grantees should take into account that the projected number of returned post-surveys is unlikely to be 100% of the educated population. Grantees can use a random sample or stratified random sample with CNCS approval of the sampling plan. In this case, results can be applied to the entire population.
Environmental Stewardship

**Output: Performance Measure EN4 (Goal 1: Environmental Stewardship: At-Risk Ecosystems)**

1. Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public and tribal lands that are treated.
2. Number of miles of trails or rivers treated

**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; see #5)
- **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.

**How to Calculate/Measure/Collect Data**

Count of number of acres and/or miles that are treated for the intent of improvement. 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; do not count the entire park/land area unless your project treats the entire area.

**Outcome: Measure EN4.1 Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public and tribal lands that are improved.**

**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; see #5)
- **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.
- **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 Data**

Count of number of acres and/or the number of miles 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 acre that is improved only once during the program year. It may be necessary to improve an acre more than once, but it should be counted only once. Only count the acres that are actually improved; do not count the entire park/land area unless your project 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.

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.
Living Independently and Resident Services

Output: CNCS Performance Measure H8

Number of older adults or individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Older Adults:** Individuals age 65 or older.
- **Individual with a Disability:** An individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.
- **Receiving food, transportation, or other services:** Individual should receive the supports needed to maintain independent living; not all individuals will require the same supports; may include food deliveries, legal and medical services, nutrition information, transportation, etc.
- **Live independently:** Individuals live in a private residence (house, apartment, mobile home, etc.) rather than in a nursing home or group home.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data

Count number of qualifying individuals as defined above who receive the service. Each individual should be counted only once. If two eligible individuals live at the same address, they should both be counted. If an eligible individual lives with someone else who is not eligible, the non-eligible individuals in the household should not be counted. Each individual should be counted only once during the program year even though most individuals are likely to need on-going support.

Outcome: CNCS Performance Measure H9

Number of older adults or individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Social ties/perceived social support:** Relationships with other people and/or the belief that these people will offer (or have offered) effective help during times of need.

How to Calculate/ Measure/ Collect Data

Members should collect data for this measure from surveys of the older adults/individuals with disabilities who received services or a survey of a family member or caseworker for those unable to respond to a survey themselves.
Participant Surveys

Administering Surveys

Surveys can be administered in a variety of forms, depending on what the member and host site find the best fit for the participants and management of information. Examples include:

- Written surveys – on paper or index card, mailings, etc.
- Online or electronic surveys
- Oral surveys – this may work best for young children or when conducting a survey by phone. Keep in mind that participant info is still required if orally administering a survey to a group.
- Using a 3rd party – for example, you may ask a teacher to administer a survey if serving a school group or classroom; you may have volunteers you manage/engage conduct surveys.

Regardless of how the survey is administered, participant info is required to ensure you are not counting participants more than once. This can be achieved by adding collecting names on written or online surveys, or using name based spreadsheets to collect information.

Survey questions may be added to other forms or means of collecting information from participants. For example, if you’re host site administers a satisfaction survey or evaluation, AmeriCorps survey questions may be added to these forms.

Environmental Education Survey Examples

After completing this training, I plan to pick up litter for proper disposal when I see it.

___Strongly Agree  ___Agree  ___Somewhat Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly Disagree

Please list what you plan to do differently after learning about the fragile environment of amphibians:

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_Weakly Agree  ___Agree  ___Somewhat Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly Disagree

After completing this training, I plan to...
Please check the following actions that you have started doing or will start doing since the beginning of the Birds of Vermont Program. Check all that apply. I will:

___ Report injured birds to my local wildlife rehabilitation Center.
___ Not attempt to rescue baby birds unless they are clearly injured.
___ Keep my pets away from areas where there are wild birds.
___ Avoid using pesticides and herbicides.
___ Turn off all outdoor lights when not in use.

______________________________________________________________________

Independent Living Survey Examples

Because I Have a Companion Volunteer …

… I feel less lonely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

… I feel I have close ties to more people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

… I can remain living in my own home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

… I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

… I am able to do more of the things I want to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

___________________________________________________________________________

Please list any social ties or support that has increased for you since being matched with your volunteer:
### Vermont Housing & Conservation Board AmeriCorps

#### Volunteer Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (enter range of dates for recurring volunteers)</th>
<th>Name of Volunteer/Group</th>
<th>Group Size (enter “C” for single volunteers)</th>
<th>total # of hours</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Recruited?</th>
<th>Mobilized?</th>
<th>First time working with this volunteer?</th>
<th>Age Group (select one)</th>
<th>Service Learning Activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/15/2014</td>
<td>Mr. One-time Volunteer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Tree planting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13/2014 - 12/24/2014</td>
<td>Ms. Regular Volunteer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Hands switchboard weekly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/24/2014</td>
<td>The Volunteer Group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Green-up park</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples:

- **Total New Volunteers:** 0
- **Total Volunteer Hours:** 0
- **Youth:** 0
- **DV:** 0
- **CS:** 0
- **BB:** 0
- **Seniors:** 0
- **Youth in S.L. Activities:** 0
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Due by end of service

1. Personal Information and Verification
2. Housing Placement, Living Independently, and Resident Services
3. Environmental Education and Stewardship Services
4. Other Services
5. Short Answer
6. AmeriCorps Initiatives and Activities

Name *
First
Last

Email *

Host Site *

List other VHCB AmeriCorps Members Covered by this report.

Before beginning, please verify that you have adhered to the following:

I confirm that I have referred to the Performance Measure Information in section 5 of the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Handbook that was given to me as part of my AmeriCorps Orientation.

Additionally, I acknowledge:
- Data is only to be reported once per service term and should not be duplicated from preceding quarterly reports. This report does not include figures recorded in previous reports submitted in the current service term.
- Please DO count anything from previous quarters that was missed, overlooked, or otherwise not counted.
- Members serving at a host site with multiple VHCB AmeriCorps members should work with the other members to ensure double-counting does not occur. Members may submit a joint report.
- Data logs and documentation should be stored at the host site and be accessible to AmeriCorps Program Staff if need be.
- Data (Individuals, acres, units, etc.) may be counted in multiple questions and/or categories in this report.
- Data from ISP and other service activities outside of normal host site duties should be included in this...
- Be as qualitative as possible in text responses.
- Do not leave any questions blank. Use "0" or "N/A" for questions that do not apply to you.

☐ By checking this box, I confirm that I have referred to the Performance Measure Information in section 5 of the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Handbook.
### Housing Placement Services

Please read through and answer all that apply, even if Housing and Resident Services are not your main focus area.

To avoid duplication of numbers, please include data taken from this quarter only unless information was not previously reported!

Individuals may be counted in multiple boxes - example: an individual may have received housing placement services, transitioned into housing, and received financial literacy services. The individual should be counted in all three boxes.

Please Provide the number of:

**Economically disadvantaged individuals including homeless individuals, receiving housing placement services.**

[ ] Count the number of Individuals

**Economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing (count number of Individuals):**

[ ] Enter number of Individuals

**Number of older adults or individuals with disabilities receiving services to help allow them to live independently.**

[ ] Enter number of Individuals
Number of older adults or individuals with disabilities who reported having increased ability to live independently.

Enter number of Individuals with increased social ties/perceived social support.

Number of all individuals receiving services to help allow them to live independently or remain in their housing.

Enter number of Individuals receiving residential services, regardless of age or ability.

Total number of individuals receiving services to improve access to food/nutrition and/or older adults/persons living with a disability to help allow them to live independently or

Enter number of unduplicated Individuals receiving food access services, and older adults or persons with disabilities receiving services to help allow them to live independently.

Economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services (count number of Individuals):

Enter number of Individuals

Economically disadvantaged individuals with demonstrated improvement in financial literacy (count number of Individuals):

Enter number of Individuals who completed surveys or tests and showed improvement

Units of information disseminated, aimed at improving financial knowledge (e.g brochures, info packets, literacy curriculum materials, flyers, etc.) through case management, housing placement services, financial literacy and credit repair workshops, homebuyer education classes, etc. (count number of units of information such as fliers, mailings, etc):

Enter units of information: example - 1 brochure = 1 unit

Homeless individuals that received housing, resident, employment services (count number of Individuals):

enter number of homeless INDIVIDUALS

Homeless families that received housing, resident, employment services (count number of family units):

enter number of FAMILY UNITS, not individuals. i.e. A family of 3 people equals 1 unit.

Of the number of individuals that received any type of housing service above, the number that are Veterans:

enter number of individual veterans
Units of housing improved or made available such as through landlord negation, weatherization, home repairs, housing vouchers etc. (count number of housing units):

[Blank field]

Enter number of housing units. Example: 1 housing unit = 1 single family home, 1 apartment, 1 mobile home, etc.

Comments or further explanation of any numbers listed above:

[Blank field]
Environmental Stewardship/Education:

Please read and respond to all applicable questions, even if Environmental Stewardship/Education is not your main focus area.

To avoid duplication of numbers, please include data taken from this quarter only!

Please Provide the number of:

**Individuals receiving environmental education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious who were surveyed for a change in behavior or the intent to change behavior:**

Enter the number of individuals that received pre/post testing for a gain in knowledge or were surveyed for a change in behavior or intent to change behavior. Please remember that you should be surveying as many individuals as possible. Only individuals that are surveyed can be reported to our AmeriCorps Grantors.

**Individuals that reported a change in behavior or intent to change behavior within one year in order to better protect the environment, engage the outdoors, and/or reduce energy consumption as a result of the educational event or training they received:**

Enter the number of individuals

**All Individuals receiving environmental education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices (including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources and sustainable agriculture):**


enter number of Individuals. You may count all individuals that received environmental education services in this field regardless if they received pre/post testing and/or surveying.

Of the individuals receiving environmental education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices, the number that were elderly, living with a disability, living in poverty, or minorities?

enter number of Individuals. You may count all individuals that received environmental education services in this field regardless if they received pre/post testing and/or surveying.

Of the individuals receiving environmental education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices, the number that were students or youth (under 18):

enter number of youth Individuals. You may count all individuals that received environmental education services in this field regardless if they received pre/post testing and/or surveying.

Total number of acres of parks or other public lands that were treated/stewarded: (includes but not limited to invasives removal, trail maintenance, cleaning, tree hazards removal, tree planting, buffering, culvert repair, boundary marking, signage, etc.):

enter the number of acres

Number of acres that were assessed by the host site as improved according to the host sites land management plan/goals:

enter number of acres

number of MILES of trails/paths that were created, maintained, or otherwise stewarded (this should also be counted in acres above):

enter number of miles (this should also be counted in acres stewarded above)

number of MILES of rivers, shoreline, or other waterways that were maintained, cleaned, or otherwise stewarded:

enter number of miles (this should also be counted in acres stewarded above)

number of acres of land or waterways that were stewarded with an intent to improve water quality

enter number of acres. You may include acres in which water quality improvement is a by-product of the stewardship activities rather than the main purpose. These acres should also be counted in the acres stewarded above.

Number of trees planted and/or maintained:

enter number of trees. Acreage upon which the trees were planted should also be counted in the acres stewarded above

Per parcel stewarded, please list:
1) Name of the properties/parks/parcels of land that were stewarded and location (town, GIS coordinates, etc) 
2) Number of acres per parcel 
3) Brief description of the type of stewardship activity 
Example: Barre Town Forest in Barre Town - 10 acres of corridor along trails (garlic mustard invasives removal).

Briefly describe how your host site assesses land for improvement.
Examples: 
- Site supervisor visits site after completion of stewardship to monitor improvements. 
- Host site is provided with photo documentation and/or mapping of improved lands for review and approval 
- Host site conducts aerial surveying of properties 
- Supervisor or representative of host site was present for the stewardship activities and documented improvement

Total number of acres of parks or other public lands that were managed or monitored and not counted above or in previous reports: 

[Enter the number of acres]

For acres not previously counted, per parcel stewarded, please list:

1) Name of the properties/parks/parcels of land that were stewarded and location (town, GIS coordinates, etc) 
2) Number of acres per parcel 
3) Brief description of the type of service activity
Example: Barre Town Forest in Barre Town - 10 acres of corridor along trails (stewardship monitoring and assessing invasive species).
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ...

1. **Personal Information and Verification**
2. **Housing Placement, Living Independently, and Resident Services**
3. **Environmental Education and Stewardship Services**
4. **Other Services**
5. **Short Answer**
6. **AmeriCorps Initiatives and Activities**

---

**Other Services**

Use this section to describe other services.

**Individuals with improved access to healthy foods or improved food security (count number of Individuals):**

Enter number of individuals that were engaged with services at least three times.

**Individuals that received job placement services such as job seeking help, resume/application assistance, training, etc. (count number of Individuals):**

Enter number of individuals.

**Number of Veterans receiving services**

Enter the number of Veterans. This field is not limited to housing placement services. In this field include Veterans that have received ANY service.

**Number of military families receiving services**

Enter the number of family units. This field is not limited to housing placement services. In this field include Veterans that have received ANY service.

**Number of housing units that have received services intended to improve energy efficiency and/or reduce carbon emissions through weatherization, retrofits and other energy efficiency measures.**

Enter number of housing units. Example: 1 housing unit = 1 single family home, 1 apartment, 1 mobile home, etc.
List any services you've engaged in relating to Disaster Relief/Emergency Preparedness.

number of organizations that have received capacity building services to expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of services and or programs?
enter number of organizations, including your host site, partnering organizations, ISP Organization, etc.

List the organizations counted above

number of systems used by host sites such as information gathering, data tracking, organization outreach, community engagement, and internal communications that are improved through member service:

List the systems counted above

Total amount of funds raised including donations, grant procurement, In-Kind donations value, etc.

Please refer to the handbook to review which types of fundraising are allowable for VHCB AmeriCorps Members.

List how the funds reported in the question above were procured:

eamples:
  - Pizza House donated 10 pizzas for community lunch valued at $120.
  - procured grant from Vermont Gardener's Assc to purchase all materials and supplies to put in a community garden at the shelter: $1500.
  - Received $450 donation from Tim's Hardware Store to provide full scholarships for 3 economically disadvantaged youth to participate in week-long summer camp.
### Short Answer

Please use this section to capture data not collected elsewhere in this report. Please be as quantitative as possible when filling in the short answer questions.

List the various Direct Service activities you have participated in which led to the numbers you submitted earlier in this report. (e.g. public programming, identified housing, arranged childcare, facilitated day camp, assisted with applications, trail maintenance, invasives removal, HomeShare matching, Landlord negotiations, etc.).

List the various Direct Service activities you have participated which were NOT previously captured in this report. (e.g. mental health service for homeless clients, resident programming, public events, etc.).
be sure to quantify when possible - i.e. number of participants at event, number of meetings and attendees, etc.

List the various Capacity Building activities you participated in (e.g. database management, outreach, volunteer mobilization, secured donations, attended agency meetings, tutored host site staff or peers, distributed fliers, etc.).

List what Impacts and Outcomes you have seen as a result of your activities (e.g. increased attendance, greater community cohesion, money disbursed, permanent housing for family whose children now have opportunity to attend the same school on a consistent basis leading to more stable learning environment, etc.):

If possible, list both quantitative and qualitative results
How has your host site benefited from your service? List benefits that are a direct result of your service (e.g. able to offer environmental services to 25 additional youth, 10 new volunteers, etc.) and tangential benefits (e.g. new community connections, expanded outreach efforts, organizational networking, technology or other system improvements, etc.):

If possible, list both quantitative and qualitative results

Please list any community connections you’ve made or fostered through your service. Include organizations, businesses, committees, groups, etc, and the type of connection (a new supplier, means of gaining new volunteers for your site, marketing for your site, new resources for referrals, a free service for you clients, etc).

If possible, list both quantitative and qualitative results. List both formal and informal connections, as well as both one-time and recurring arrangements.

Please list any additional information regarding your service activities that does not fit elsewhere in this report.
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Environmental Education and Stewardship Services
Other Services
Short Answer
AmeriCorps Initiatives and Activities
Great Story
Certification

AmeriCorps Initiatives and Activities

How many books did you review this quarter as part of the AmeriCorps Book Club, if any?

List only completed book reviews. Do not include books for which a report has not been submitted to VHCB AmeriCorps.

List any books you reviewed this quarter:

include the title and author of the book

Enter the number of hours you dedicated to R.A.R.E Opportunity in this quarter.

Round hours to the nearest (.25). Include all time regardless whether it was listed on your timesheet.

Please list any AmeriCorps Outreach (R.A.R.E. Opportunity) activities you participated in:

Examples of activities include: representing AmeriCorps at public events, AmeriCorps recruitment efforts, sharing stories of your service (including print and online), meeting with individuals to talk about AmeriCorps Opportunities, assisting an individual with an AmeriCorps Application, talking to school groups, dispersing AmeriCorps materials, etc. Include activities not listed on your timesheet.

List any peer site visits you completed in this quarter:
List the member, site and date you visited. Also list the AmeriCorps Program if the visit was to an non-VHCB AmeriCorps site.

**Briefly describe your progress toward your Independent Service Project (ISP):**

Please include what stage the project is in (not started, planning, executing, completed, etc).

**Please list any projects or collaborative efforts that you collaborated on with other AmeriCorps members or their host sites, or other means in which you’ve interacted with other members.**

Briefly describe the projects/events/type of interaction, the nature of your participation/contribution, and with whom you collaborated.

**List any trainings or events outside of VHCB AmeriCorps events that you have attended as part of your service:**

**List any networking opportunities you have taken part in as part of your service:**

examples: conference or meeting attendance, job shadowing, mentoring, participating in a social group, informal meet-ups, regional gatherings, informational interviews, etc.
Great Story

Please share a “Service Story” from your service term - a reflection on something meaningful or significant that you have experienced, observed, or that came about as a result of your service. Include how you believe YOU had an impact on the individual, situation, etc. Please submit any supporting photos to AmeriCorps staff via email. For sensitive cases, please use substitute names in place of real names to protect the privacy of clients.

Lengthy stories may be submitted to Francis or Erin via email rather than submitted here. Please note in box above in emailing story.
Please attach a photo to go with your story. If you do not have a photo that matches your story, you may submit a photo of yourself (wearing the AmeriCorps logo).

Browse...

We love to get photos of your service. Please email us photos of you, your projects, or other relevant service photos at any time!
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3 Environmental Education and Stewardship Services
4 Other Services
5 Short Answer
6 AmeriCorps Initiatives and Activities
7 Great Story
8 Certification

Certifications

Have you submitted the Volunteer Log? *
☐ Yes, it has been emailed to VHCB AC staff.
☐ No, I do not have any volunteers to report.

Please verify that all information stated in this report is correct: *
☐ By clicking here, I certify that I have informed my sponsor where the supporting documentation for this data (e.g. logs) is stored. I understand that this documentation will need to be available to VHCB and/or the CNCS upon request for at least seven
☐ By clicking here, I certify that my supervisor and/or host site have reviewed and approve the data submitted in this report.
☐ By clicking here, I certify that to the best of my knowledge, the data provided in this report is true and correct.

Signature

Report Complete

Upon submission of this report, you will receive a copy of your completed report via email. Please retain a copy of this report for your records.
VHCB 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.

Employee Assistance Program

As a VHCB AmeriCorps Member, you have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Invest EAP. The EAP offers free and confidential short-term counseling sessions and other benefits such as referrals to attorneys or financial counselors. Issues that EAPs 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 1-866-660-9533 or visit their website www.investeap.org. The password to access services is: VHCB

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/ra.htm

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 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://www.dcf.state.vt.us/oeo/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://www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/fuel_assistance](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/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/](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/esd/3SquaresVT](http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/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](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://www.dcf.state.vt.us/esd/farm_to_family](http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/esd/farm_to_family)

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 [http://www.dcf.vermont.gov/health_insurance](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov/health_insurance)
Members may qualify for low-cost dental services at the following facilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic</td>
<td><a href="http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com/">http://brattleborowalkinclinic.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Centers of Burlington</td>
<td><a href="http://www.chcb.org/services-programs/dental-care">http://www.chcb.org/services-programs/dental-care</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland Free Clinic</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vccu.net/rfc.htm">http://www.vccu.net/rfc.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Neighbor Clinic, White River Junction</td>
<td><a href="http://www.goodneighborhealthclinic.org/">http://www.goodneighborhealthclinic.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Tech Dental Hygiene Clinic, Williston</td>
<td><a href="http://www.goodneighborhealthclinic.org/">http://www.goodneighborhealthclinic.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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://dfc.vermont.gov/cdd/families/pay_child_care/subsidy

Entertainment and 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:
Travel in Vermont website at: http://www.travelinvermont.com/recreation.htm
Vermont Department of Forests and Parks website at http://www.vtfpr.org/
Events from the State of Vermont Official Tourism Site at http://www.vermontvacation.com/about%20vermont/news%20and%20events.aspx
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://www.dcf.state.vt.us/community_action_agencies

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://www.dcf.state.vt.us/oeo/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://www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/phone_assistance#Lifeline

Link Up VT (Telephone):
If you don’t have phone service or you are moving and requesting phone service in your new home, the Link-Up Vermont Program can cut the cost of getting your phone service connected in half, up to a maximum benefit of $30. You can find information at http://www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/phone_assistance#Link-Up

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://www.localmotion.org/programs/bikerecycle/getabike

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

### Local Bus Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Counties Served</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Community Transportation Inc.</td>
<td>Essex, Caledonia, Orleans and Lamoille</td>
<td><a href="http://www.riderct.org/">http://www.riderct.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bus</td>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thebus.com/">http://www.thebus.com/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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://www.vyp.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](http://askheatherjarvis.com/webinars)
   - Clear (clear, clear) FAQs and steps for accessing public service loan forgiveness- [http://askheatherjarvis.com/tools](http://askheatherjarvis.com/tools)
   - A blog with topical news and timely advice - [http://askheatherjarvis.com/blog](http://askheatherjarvis.com/blog)
   - A forum for you to connect with Heather and others who are paying attention- [http://askheatherjarvis.com/forums](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](http://www.ibrinfo.org/what.vp.html)
   - Snapshot of who is eligible to participate in the programs- [http://www.ibrinfo.org/can.vp.html](http://www.ibrinfo.org/can.vp.html)
   - Tips for accessing loan relief through the programs- [http://www.ibrinfo.org/how.vp.html](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](http://www.ibrinfo.org/updates.vp.html)

3. **EdAward.org**

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:
• Multimedia stories explaining how different AmeriCorps members and alumni used their Ed Awards- http://edaward.org/content/ed-award-stories

• How to make the most of your Ed Award when you go to school and to pay back loans- http://edaward.org/content/go-school and http://edaward.org/content/pay-back-loans

• Strategies for dealing with the extra taxable income (the Ed Award is fully taxable)- http://edaward.org/content/learn-about-taxes


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://gradfairs.idealist.org/

• 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

- EdFund.org
- 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/
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.
If you have further questions about Food Stamp Program rules and countable income, please feel free to contact Renée 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. Renée can be reached directly by calling 802-241-2820, or by email at reene@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
Secretary, Agency of Human Services

cc: Renée Richardson
Claire LaRose
[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 I 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.
Dear Benefits Manager,

AmeriCorps Joe is a full time member of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board AmeriCorps (VHCB AmeriCorps) program. Joe will earn a gross living allowance of $14,841 for serving 1,700 service and training hours within a twelve-month period. This will happen between September 02nd, 2014 and August 14th, 2015. The living allowance is distributed in biweekly paychecks of $593.64 gross every other week for the above contract period. Please note that the living allowance is taxable.

This is not considered a “wage”, but a “living allowance”, and may not be paid out on an hourly basis. These members are not considered “employees” or “volunteers”. Their contract is for this approximate 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 Joe 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) 828-3253. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Francis Sharpstene

VHCB AmeriCorps
CREATE LOGIN

To register for EAP visit: https://www.investeap.org/members/register

Enter personal email address and password. The Organization Password is VHCB.

Please create a login to access investeap.org

Email *
Your email is strictly confidential, used for your personal access to this site only, and to receive our newsletter if you choose. Your email is never associated with any activity on this site and never shared with anyone.

Password *
Create a personal password that you will use to access investeap.org

Organization Password *
Your organization's shared password for accessing investeap.org. If you do not know this password, please click here.

ABOUT EAP

Invest EAP is a Vermont-based non-profit collaborative that has offered comprehensive employee assistance services since 1986. We promote the health and wellbeing of the organizations, employees and family members we serve. Invest EAP provides short-term counseling and referral, management consultation, training and resource information.

Invest EAP’s comprehensive confidential services include:

- 24/7 telephone access to counselors
- In-person counseling sessions
- Management consultation
- Counseling, resource and referral information on:
  - Relationships and Family
  - Drug and Alcohol
  - Mental Health
  - Grief and Loss
  - Medical
  - Disability
  - Eldercare
  - Childcare
  - Parenting Techniques
  - Workplace Conflict
  - Legal Issues
- Financial Problems
  - Wellness workshops
  - Critical Incident Stress Debriefings
  - Facilitated discussions
  - Organizational development
  - Workplace wellness program development
  - Much, much more!

If it causes you stress or worry, give us a call. Our local, experienced staff can help.

If you are a member and would like learn more about your benefit, schedule an appointment or to ask a question please call 1-866-660-9533.

EAP COUNSELING BENEFITS

What is my Employee Assistance Program counseling benefit?

EAP offers you the opportunity to meet confidentially and free of charge with a specialist who can help you with a wide range of life issues that may be impacting you or your job.

EAP is for short-term counseling to address a specific issue. Generally speaking, an EAP counselor can meet with you for a handful of sessions; that is, between one and five sessions, except when there are extenuating circumstances. If an EAP counselor believes you would benefit most from longer-term counseling he or she will refer you to a specialist, or sometimes ‘refer’ you to him/herself, if that is agreeable to you both. Your EAP benefit is specifically defined to be flexible.

Please bear in mind that longer-term counseling, fundamentally different from short-term EAP support, is paid for by you, out-of-pocket and/or through your insurance as an outpatient mental health benefit. We will work to find you a counselor who fits with your insurance requirements. Such referrals are generally made by your EAP counselor during the course of assessment, which occurs in the first session or two. While we encourage you to consider the recommendations of the EAP counselor if they suggest you would benefit from a switch to longer term work, you may always request to simply see him/her for the brief EAP approach. By electing only to do brief EAP work (within one to five sessions) please understand that your EAP counselor will likely re-define with you the focus of your sessions so that they are limited to what can realistically be addressed in the short term work.

Can an EAP counselor ever meet with me longer term, or could EAP ever pay for the cost of my work with a private mental health clinician?
Yes. If you have a qualifying condition, which may include a serious ongoing issue with depression or anxiety of more than 6 months duration, EAP may be able to arrange for funding to help. Please inform your EAP counselor if you think you may have such a qualifying disability.

**What can I expect from EAP if I want to have a legal consultation that involves my employer?**

Legal issues that fall under the category of 'labor law' are ones that EAP is precluded from providing you with a legal consultation. But while EAP cannot assist you in pursuit of legal action against your employer for any reason, what it can do is provide you with emotional support and coping strategies to help you manage your life during such difficult circumstances.

**What can I expect from EAP if I request a letter or other documentation on my behalf for any legal matter, whether it relates to a work dispute or a personal matter?**

EAP does not disclose any session material or testimonial letters to attorneys to support claims against their employers or custody battles with spouses. Brief EAP work is not sufficient or appropriate for producing such testimonials. Employees can instead seek a long-term relationship with a therapist to engage such testimonial support.

**Questions about your EAP benefits? Please call 888-392-0050**
VHCB AmeriCorps

Member Handbook

Health Care

Section 7
Health Care Options

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

The Corps Network

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board 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 Plan — Medical, Prescription & AD&D

**September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022**
*Medical by Cigna, AD&D by Gerber*
*Medical Group Number: 3333030*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit / Provision</th>
<th>Cigna Provider</th>
<th>Out of Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deductible</strong> Per Plan Year (September 1 – August 31) <em>(Applies to all services except in-network Preventive and Office Visits)</em></td>
<td>$175</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-Pocket Maximum</strong> <em>(Includes Deductible)</em></td>
<td>$2,750</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifetime Maximum</strong></td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preventive (Routine) Care</strong></td>
<td>100% (no deductible)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prescription Drugs (Express Scripts Value List)</strong></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telehealth (MDLive includes Behavioral Health)</strong></td>
<td>(no deductible)</td>
<td>$5 copay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office Visits</strong></td>
<td><em>(no deductible)</em></td>
<td>$0 copay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care</td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Tier 1 Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Services</strong> <em>(Surgery, Lab &amp; X-Ray)</em></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urgent Care</strong></td>
<td>$20 co-pay, then covered at 80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambulance</strong></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Room</strong></td>
<td>$100 co-pay, then covered at 80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hospital</strong> <em>(Inpatient pre-authorization required)</em></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health</strong> <em>(Inpatient and Outpatient)</em></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemical Dependency</strong> <em>(Inpatient and Outpatient)</em></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outpatient Rehabilitation - 20 visits per Plan Year</strong> <em>(Physical, Speech, Occupational, Cardiac therapies and Phlebotomy)</em></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</strong></td>
<td>24/7 telephonic support, 3 free face-to-face visits for life events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AD&amp;D</strong></td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate</strong> <em>(Per Corpsmember, Per Month)</em></td>
<td>$36.74*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cigna requires pre-authorization for all inpatient hospital, some outpatient procedures and certain drugs.

*100% of premium is paid by your program.

This is a summary of your coverage. Further detail can be found by contacting Cigna.

Out-of-network coverage is based on Cigna’s maximum allowable charge and may result in additional out-of-pocket expenses.*
The Corps Network Health Plan
Cigna Mental Health Services

Mental health is an important part of your overall health. Recognizing this, The Corps Network Health Plan offers several ways of accessing mental health services through Cigna.

**General Mental Health Services**

**MyCigna.com**
Search for a behavioral health provider to schedule an appointment either in-person OR virtually (if offered by the clinician).

**How to Access:**
- Visit myCigna.com, go to “Find Care & Costs”
  - Search by “counselor” or “virtual counselor” under Doctor by Type
  - You can also filter by mental health condition Type
  - Call the number on the back of your Cigna ID card

**MDLive**
Schedule a virtual care provider appointment via the MDLive app/website.

**How to Access:**
- https://www.mdlive.com/cigna
- myCigna.com
- 888.726.2171

**Cigna Total Behavioral Health EAP**
Three free face-to-face visits with an EAP provider.

**How to Access:**
- Visit myCigna.com, go to “Find Care & Costs”
  - Search by “counselor” or “virtual counselor” under Doctor by Type
  - Filter by ‘EAP’ benefits
  - Call the number on the back of your Cigna ID card

**Talkspace**
Virtually connects you with a therapist either via video or private text messaging.

**How to Access:**
- https://www.talkspace.com/cigna
- myCigna.com

**Condition Specific Support**

Through myCigna.com:

- **myCigna Health** – 12 week virtual counseling for depression, anxiety or burnout
- **MAP** – Peer support recovery from substance abuse disorder
- **NOCOD** – Virtual therapy for OCD

**Tools and Resources**

Through myCigna.com:

- **Happify** – app-based self-directed program with activities, science-based games and meditation designed to help members reduce stress and anxiety and boost resilience.
- **iPrevail** – app-based digital therapeutics program with interactive video lessons and one-on-one coaching to help with depression and anxiety.
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. SMC, 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.
Eligibility FAQs — Medical

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.

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 and corpsmembers are not considered employees. Therefore, COBRA will not be offered. In certain states, however, Cigna is required to offer continuation of the medical plan to exiting members, and eligible members will receive a letter from them.
Eligibility FAQs — Medical

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 SMIC as part of the normal billing process.

What options are available to corpsmembers for health coverage when their 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 90 days from the date coverage ends to sign up for a plan through the federal healthcare marketplace or applicable state exchange.

In some states, Cigna is required to offer continuation coverage to exiting members. Cigna will send a letter directly to exiting corpsmembers in the affected states.

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 gaps in lifetime benefits or essential benefits and the plan qualifies as Minimum Essential Coverage.

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 use 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 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, SMIC can assist with a report that reflects who was actually covered during the year, but of course, not all who were offered coverage. Form 1095c must be submitted to the IRS. This form will be submitted to the IRS by Cigna.
Eligibility FAQs — Medical

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 those standards and satisfies a program’s obligation.

Who will answer any additional questions that I have?

The broker for The Corps Network plan is Willie Towers Watson. Please email Julie Nelson at Julie.nelson@willietowerswatson.com with questions.

Note About Plan Administration

Once your Program is set up for coverage at SMIC, all adds, terminations and changes of coverage will be done by the Program Administration on SMIC’s online enrollment portal.
## Health Plan Contact List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Primary Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Corps Network</strong>&lt;br&gt;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 Health 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.</td>
<td>Lashauntya Moore, Member Services Coordinator&lt;br&gt;Phone: 1-202-737-5272 ext. 104&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:lmoore@corpsnetwork.org">lmoore@corpsnetwork.org</a>&lt;br&gt;Website: <a href="http://www.corpsnetwork.org">www.corpsnetwork.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willis Towers Watson</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wills 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 program administrators.</td>
<td>Julie Nelson, Associate Director&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:julie.nelson@willistowerswatson.com">julie.nelson@willistowerswatson.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIGNA – Group Number 3338030</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cigna administers the medical/prescription drug coverage. That includes claims processing and customer service, as well as virtual ID cards.</td>
<td>Customer Service (Medical/Prescription)&lt;br&gt;Phone: 1-800-244-6224&lt;br&gt;Website: <a href="http://www.cigna.com">www.cigna.com</a> or <a href="http://www.myCigna.com">www.myCigna.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIGNA Provider Network</strong>&lt;br&gt;The OAP network allows you to receive a higher benefit from the plan and reduces your out-of-pocket expenses for both medical and prescription drugs. Members can access high quality providers by looking for those with a “Tier 1” designation (when available).</td>
<td>Provider Lookup&lt;br&gt;Phone: 1-800-244-6224&lt;br&gt;Online: <a href="http://www.myCigna.com">www.myCigna.com</a> or the myCigna app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMIC (New on September 1, 2021)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Eligibility, billing, and premium collection are handled by SMIC. SMIC provides the enrollment portal for ongoing additions and terminations as well.</td>
<td>Jordan Nikolai, Account Manager&lt;br&gt;Phone: 1-719-309-6198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*An Amwins company*

| **CIGNA – Dental/Vision Coverage (Optional)**<br>CIGNA is the insurance company contracted to handle the dental/vision benefits available under The Corps Network Health Plan. They process the claims and provide customer service. | Customer Service/Claim Forms<br>Dental - Phone: 1-800-244-6224<br>Vision - Phone: 1-877-478-7597<br>Website: www.myCigna.com |
| **Claims Address**<br>The Corps Network Claims<br>CIGNA – Dental/Vision Claims<br>PO Box 182223<br>Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223 |
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Covered?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certified Nurse Midwife</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiropractic *</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Mental Health Center</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental *</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dentures</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diabetic Supplies</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eye Exams*</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyeglasses</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Planning</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gynecological Services (ob-gyn)</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Aids *</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Health Nursing</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Health Aide</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Hospice</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunizations</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inpatient Hospital</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Tests and X-rays/Imaging</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Equipment</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maxillofacial Surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Supplies</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Counselors</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturopaths</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Nursing Facility</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Nutrition Therapy</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ophthalmologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organ Transplants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodontics</td>
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<td>Outpatient Hospital</td>
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<td>Over-the-Counter Drugs</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiatry</td>
<td>Y</td>
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### 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:
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
VHCB AmeriCorps
Member Handbook

Member Agreement

Section 8
VHCB AmeriCorps

2021-2022 Member Agreement of Participation in the VHCB AmeriCorps Program

Whereas, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) have jointly entered into this Agreement to promote national service and community leadership among the citizens of the United States to help address critical human needs related to poverty and the environment while implementing strategies for long-term solutions, and;
Whereas, the goal of the VHCB AmeriCorps Program is to engage a diverse group of Americans in working partnerships with communities to provide real and measurable service while developing leadership skills, and fostering responsible citizenship.

AUTHORITY: This Agreement is entered into pursuant to the authority of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended (42 USC 12501 et. Seq.), Public Law 103-82.

It is the purpose of this Agreement to delineate the terms, conditions, and rules of Membership regarding participation in the VHCB AmeriCorps Program.

This Agreement is hereby entered into between the VHCB AmeriCorps Program (hereinafter referred to as VHCB AC or simply the “Program” and the participating AmeriCorps Members (hereinafter referred to as the “member” or “ACM”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of AmeriCorps Member</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Host Site Organization (HSO)</th>
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<th>Position Title</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Host Site Supervisor</th>
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I. Minimum Qualifications

The member certifies that they are a United States citizen, a US national or a legal permanent resident, and at least 17 years of age, and has disclosed to the program if they have been previously terminated for cause from another AmeriCorps Program. If a member is 17 years old, they agree to provide a consent form to VHCB AC signed by a parent or legal guardian. The member further certifies that they
have obtained a high school diploma or equivalency certificate or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award and will begin to do so as a goal of their AmeriCorps year. The member also certifies that they have not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member.

The member understands that, in order to be in compliance with the Corporation for National and Community Service’s Final Rule on criminal history checks (CFR, Vol. 72, No. 164, Parts 2522 and 2540), all AmeriCorps members must undergo a National Service Criminal History Check consisting of (1) a criminal registry search, which involves an authorized FBI fingerprint check to determine whether an applicant has a criminal history, (2) a background check through the state system from the state in which the member lived at the time they applied to the Program, and the state in which the member will be serving (3) and a National Sex Offender Public Registry check, which consists of individuals that are required by their States to register as sex offenders. Additionally members must undergo (4) a Vermont Child Protection Registry check; and, (5) a Vermont Adult Abuse Registry check. A program must conduct a criminal registry check and NSOPR check the first time an individual applies to a covered position in an AmeriCorps State and National program, but a second check is not required for an individual who is serving a consecutive term of service within the same program. A consecutive term of service means that there is no intervening break in service of more than 180 days during which the applicant did not serve in that specific program.

An individual who refuses to consent to a National Service Criminal History Check is not eligible to serve. No VHCB AC applicant may have unsupervised access to vulnerable individuals (children, people living with disabilities, frail elders, etc.) until the results of his or the criminal registry checks have been reviewed and verified by the Program. The Program will reimburse associated costs incurred by the potential member and/or Host Site Organization (HSO) in order to comply with the Policy (e.g. mileage to travel to fingerprinting sites).

The member further understands that if the criminal check is returned showing a conviction, they will be able to meet with an investigative panel comprised of the VHCB AC Program Director or appointee, an appointee from the HSO, and possibly the General Counsel for VHCB, to review the charges and negotiate an outcome based on the advice and the judgment of the aforementioned parties. This outcome may include release for cause. The member understands that by signing this contract they give authorization to VHCB AC to disclose information to any of the aforementioned parties and any other appropriate parties, such as those in supervisory roles at their HSO. If the member disagrees with the contents of the results, they may appeal the finding to the Program Director of VHCB AC and the issuing body.

The member understands that VHCB AC has agreed to use the criminal record information for the purposes intended by law, and that VHCB AC has agreed to not disclose the contents of any criminal record information without the member’s permission to any individual other than the member, as well as properly designated employees of VHCB who have a documented need to know the contents of said record, or designated entities which monitor the program for compliance. In addition to the foregoing, it is acknowledged that any and all information that any individual member of VHCB is made privy to is
strictly confidential and that each unauthorized disclosure shall constitute a separate civil violation and may result in a fine.

The member understands that if the final criminal check indicates that they have provided false information on the legal section of the VHCB AC application or elsewhere, or that they have been convicted of a crime against children, a violent crime or a crime that violates the public trust, murder, or sexual offense, this Agreement will become null and void, and they will be dismissed from the VHCB AmeriCorps program for cause.

II. Term of Service

This member is serving the following term: ______________________________________

Full-Time (1720 hours), Half-Time (915 hours), Reduced Half Time (685 hours), Quarter Time (455 hours), or Minimum Time (305 hours).

This _____________ term (________ hours) will start on _________________________, and will end on _______________________. Living Allowance payments will begin on _____________________ and end on _____________________. There are _______ pay periods that fall within this term of service. This member will receive $________________ per pay period, not to exceed a total amount of $________________. This member will serve a minimum of ____________ hours and maintain an average of at least _________ hours per week.

Once a term of service is set and a member signs this Agreement, the distribution of the living allowance cannot be altered, without permission of VHCB AC pursuant to AmeriCorps regulations, policies, and provisions.

For full-time members, the end date cannot be less than nine months and not more than twelve months from the start date. Half-time members, quarter-time members and other part-time members understand that this AmeriCorps term counts as a term of service. Individuals may not serve more than four (4) terms of service. The 4 terms include incomplete terms in which members served more than 15% of total hours, regardless of the reason for not completing service; and incomplete terms in which members served for less than 15% of total hours and were released for misconduct.

Individuals may not receive more than the amount equal to the aggregate value of two full-time education awards.

The member, if full-time, must complete a minimum of 1720 hours of direct community service within the above-stipulated timeframe in order to be eligible for the education award. The 1720 hours may include only up to 20% (344) approved training hours and 10% (172) fundraising hours. A half-time member must complete 915 hours of direct service, which may include only up to 20% (183) approved
training hours and 10% (92) fundraising hours. A quarter-time member must complete 460 hours of direct service, which may include only up to 20% (92) approved training hours and 10% (46) fundraising hours. A minimum-time member must complete 310 hours of direct service, which may include only up to 20% (62) approved training hours and 10% (31) fundraising hours. In some cases, members may serve more than the maximum of 20% training hours with written Program approval. Members should contact the VHCB AC Program Director to request approval to claim training hours in excess of 20% total hours.

While a member may claim up to 10% of hours as fundraising activities, fundraising activities are limited in the following manner:

“45 CFR §2520.40-.45 Under what circumstances may AmeriCorps members in my program raise resources?
(a) AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of your program’s service activities.
(b) Examples of fundraising activities AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:
(1) Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
(2) Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
(3) Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
(4) 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;
(5) Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.
(c) AmeriCorps members may not:
(1) Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization’s general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
(2) Write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.”

[70 FR 39597, July 8, 2005]

In order to successfully complete the term of service, the member is required to complete the minimum hours requirement and fulfill the dates of service agreed upon unless an amendment signed by the member and the Program Director and is completed.

If members would like to change their end date, then they should do the following:

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:
Gain approval from the member’s direct supervisor and/or host site.
Submit a written letter to the VHCB AC Program Director, at least sixty (60) days prior to the requested amended end date. The letter should list the new end date, the reason for request, and be signed by both the member and the site supervisor. If the supervisor does not agree, then the date cannot be changed.

The VHCB AC Program Director will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions. If the VHCB AC Program Director approves the request, the member, supervisor, and VHCB AC Program Director will be required to sign a contract amendment.

Members understand that they may forfeit any living allowance payments due to them after the new, earlier end date.

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:
Gain approval from the member’s direct supervisor and/or HSO.
Submit a written letter to the VHCB AC Program Director, at least sixty 60 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.

VHCB AC Program Director will review the request and make a decision pursuant to AmeriCorps policies and provisions. If the VHCB AC Program Director approves the request, the member, supervisor and VHCB Program Director will be required to sign a contract amendment.

Members understand that the living allowance amount may not be able to be re-calculated, and the member may not be able to receive additional living allowance payments past the original end date. The member also understands that they are not entitled to living allowance payments that would total more than $20,400 for full time members ($10,800 half time; and $5,400 quarter-time).

The member understands that in order to be eligible for serving a succeeding term of service, they must receive at least one satisfactory performance review for any previous term of service. The member’s eligibility for a subsequent term of service will be based on at least a mid-term and end of term evaluation of their performance focusing on factors such as:
Completing the required number of hours;
Satisfactorily completing assignments, tasks, or projects as well as required paperwork; and,
Meeting any other criteria that were clearly communicated orally or in writing at the beginning of the term of service (see the Member Performance Review for all evaluation criteria), including receiving a satisfactory performance evaluation from HSO supervisors.

The member understands, however, that mere eligibility for an additional term of service does not guarantee selection or placement. The Program is under no obligation to enroll members for a second term of service. The member will have to apply and be considered with any other applicants applying for positions.
Due to the priority of AmeriCorps to provide resources in times of natural or man-made disasters and emergencies, AmeriCorps or SerVermont may call up and deploy AmeriCorps members to respond to Vermont disasters as part of an emergency response effort. The deployment may continue for up to 10% of their service time (up to a maximum of 120 hours) over the course of a year of service. During the period of deployment, the Program will continue to pay the living allowance and insurance for AmeriCorps members. All AmeriCorps program policies, terms and conditions shall continue while on special disaster relief assignment. All benefits and protections afforded and provided to AmeriCorps members shall continue while AmeriCorps members remain on special disaster relief assignment. AmeriCorps members may continue to accrue service hours during any deployment. Although VHCB AmeriCorps is required to allow the deployment, individual members may refuse the assignment.

III. Benefits

The member will receive from the Program the following benefits:

Living Allowance: A maximum living allowance of $20,400 less tax and FICA withholdings for full-time members or a maximum living allowance of $10,800 less tax and FICA withholdings for half-time members, or a maximum living allowance of $5,400 less tax and FICA withholdings for quarter-time members (withholding amounts will be based upon federal and state law based on information provided by the member on IRS/OMB W-4 forms). The allowance will be distributed every other week only while the member is actively serving, beginning with the Thursday one to three weeks after the member’s term of service begins, and only if the Program has documentation that the member is actively serving including approved timesheets and required enrollment paperwork sent into VHCB AC on a timely basis.

The living allowance is not based on actual hours served in a given pay period. It is designed to help members meet their living needs while in service. The living allowance will not fluctuate based on the number of hours served per week.

Health Care Coverage: Members must have Health Care Coverage, either as provided by the AmeriCorps plan or by another health care plan. AmeriCorps Health Care Coverage will be set up by VHCB AmeriCorps through a plan that meets AmeriCorps requirements and has been selected by VHCB AmeriCorps.

Child Care Subsidy: A child care allowance to be provided directly to the state-qualified provider, if the member is qualified for the allowance (only full-time, state-eligible members may qualify for this benefit) and if the State Program is somehow not suited to their needs.

Worker’s Compensation Insurance

The member will receive from AmeriCorps the following benefits:
Education Award: Upon successful completion of the member’s term of service, the member will receive an education award in voucher form having a gross value of $6,345.00 for full-time members or $3,172.50 for half-time members, or $1,678.57 for quarter-time members, or $1,342.86 for minimum-time members if they have not received the aggregated value of two (2) full-time education awards previously. Any member who has previously received the value of two (2) full time previous education awards from the National Service Trust will not be eligible for additional education awards under any circumstances. The member understands that this award counts as taxable income in the year in which it is used.

Prior to using the education award, the member agrees that in the event that they have not yet received a high school diploma or its equivalent, including an alternative diploma or certificate for individuals with learning disabilities, then they must obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent (unless the member is enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis or the Program has waived the requirement due to the results of the member’s education assessment). The member further agrees to provide the National Service Trust with documentation of successful completion of their GED so as to be able to access the education award.

The member understands that failure to disclose to the Program any history of having already served in previous terms as an AmeriCorps member (of any type) or of having been released for cause from another AmeriCorps Program will render the member ineligible to receive the education award.

Members understand that if they are at least 55 years old when they start service and they meet all AmeriCorps requirements, then they may be eligible to transfer all or part of the education award to a child, grandchild, foster child, or foster grandchild.

Members are eligible to receive forbearance on qualified student loans during the term of service.

Upon successful completion of the term of service, the National Service Trust will repay some to all of the interest that accrued on loans in forbearance during the term of service of an amount which is based on a formula determined by AmeriCorps, and assuming the proper forms are submitted. The interest that the Trust will pay is also subject to income taxes.
IV. Rules of Conduct

The member agrees to act in conformance with, and abide by, all current and future rules and procedures established by VHCB AC and the Host Site Organization.

The member is expected to, at all times while acting in an official capacity as a VHCB AC AmeriCorps Member or while wearing any part of the AmeriCorps uniform having a logo:
(a) demonstrate mutual respect toward others;
(b) conduct themselves in a cooperative manner;
(c) direct concerns, problems, and suggestions to the appropriate HSO and/or Program official;
(d) be punctual and have regular reliable attendance at service site;
   (e) effectively meet the objectives laid out in the position description;
(f) prioritize, attend, and fully participate in AmeriCorps trainings and events;
(g) complete the requirements of an Independent Service Project;
(h) always identify as an AmeriCorps member and wear some type of AmeriCorps identification during service hours (e.g., shirt, pin, sticker, sweatshirt);
(i) comply with VHCB AmeriCorps' commitment to practicing effective risk management to ensure the safety, dignity, and legal rights of its participants. It is also our intent to properly manage any incidents that occur so as to minimize injury and other forms of loss. As such, VHCB AmeriCorps members agree to follow basic emergency procedures covering any major, unanticipated event that would disrupt the delivery of services and/or place the member and/or activity participants in danger. This includes, at minimum, obtaining emergency contact information forms, permission slips, liability waivers, and photo release forms for participants who are minors or who are need of special support services. All members should participate in its host site's training on organizational emergency procedures (e.g., tool safety, evacuation plans, phone numbers of back-up staff, local police and fire stations, incident report forms, etc.). All members who are operating or accompanying a vehicle for a service-related activity shall do so in a safe and reasonable manner, shall adhere to state law on operating motor vehicles (Vermont, Title 23, Chapter 13) and shall carry a valid driver's license. Should an incident occur, the member (or supervisor, if appropriate) agrees to notify VHCB within one business day from the event and submit an Incidence Report Form within 36 hours;
(j) abide by all rules, regulations, and guidelines set forth in the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Handbook; and,
(k) abide by any corrective action plans, agreements, and/or written warnings put forth by the Host Site Organization or VHCB AmeriCorps Program Staff.

The member understands that the following acts will also constitute a violation of the Program’s rules of conduct:
Unauthorized repeated tardiness or absences;
Repeated use of inappropriate or derogatory language (i.e. profanity) at service site;
Repeated failure to wear appropriate clothing or AmeriCorps logo to service assignments;
Stealing or lying;
Providing false information on timesheets or failing to submit timesheets on time;
Engaging in activity that may physically or emotionally damage self, other members of the Program or members of the community;
Refuse or otherwise not meet the standards outlined in the AmeriCorps Member Position Description, including performing the listed functions;
Failing to respond to communication requests from Program Staff or HSO in a timely manner;
Failure to notify the Program of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of service; or
Failure to meet the standards in section IV, paragraph 2.

Prohibited Activities. While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:
Attempting to influence legislation;
Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
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;
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;
Providing a direct benefit to—
A business organized for profit;
A labor union;
A partisan political organization;
A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative;
An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;

i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and,
k. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the above (legal) activities on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.
Members are further disallowed to do clerical or administrative service unless such activities are incidental to their direct service activities.

Members should be trained on organizational emergency procedures (e.g., evacuation plans, phone numbers of back-up staff, local police and fire stations, incident report forms, etc.). All members who are operating or accompanying a vehicle for a service-related activity shall do so in a safe and reasonable manner, shall adhere to state law on operating motor vehicles (Vermont, Title 23, Chapter 13) and shall carry a valid driver’s license. All members who are operating potentially hazardous equipment (e.g., electric saws, tractors, etc.) shall have proper training and guidance prior to operating the equipment. The member understands that, if the aforementioned protocols and information have not been made accessible by the member’s HSO, the member will submit a request to their HSO to provide the appropriate resources.

A member’s service activities may not include organized fundraising activities that help the Grantee achieve its matching requirements, that support an organization’s general operating expenses, or that provide fundraising assistance to other community-based organizations that do not provide immediate and direct support to a Grantee’s approved Program objective. These disallowed activities include financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, or preparation of grant proposals. Service activities that raise funds or in-kind contributions while generating, involving and/or encouraging community support may be considered appropriate and allowable, such as serve-a-thons, to the extent they are in direct and immediate support of an approved objective of the Program and provided that they are not the Program’s primary activity or involve significant amounts of an individual member’s time.

Consequences: In the event of a violation of any of the above stated rules, the Program Director, Host Site Supervisor, or representative of the VHCB AC Program or Host Site may do the following; however, there is no requirement that the Program follow a prescribed sequence in the imposition of a particular consequence:

1. An appropriate Program official will issue a verbal warning to the member;
2. An appropriate Program official will issue a written warning and reprimand to the member;
3. The member may be required to submit a written corrective action plan to be approved and signed by appropriate Program official(s) or be assigned a corrective action plan by an appropriate Program official.
4. The member may be suspended for one or more days without compensation if additional time is needed to correct a violation.
5. The Program may release the member for cause.

The Program reserves the right to impose any one of the above sanctions regardless of the number of the offense (first, second, or third) if the Program determines that the violation is serious enough to warrant a severe sanction. Examples would be in cases where during the term of service the member...
has been charged with or convicted of a violent felony, possession, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance, refuses to engage in a corrective action plan, knowingly engages in prohibited activities while serving, causes harm to another individual during service, etc.

V. Release From Term of Service

The member understands that they may be released for the following two reasons:
for cause, as explained in paragraph 2 of this section; or
compelling personal circumstances as defined in paragraph 3 of this section.

The Program will release the member for cause for the following reasons:

The member has dropped out of the Program without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances from the VHCB AC Program Director,
The member is found to have lied on the application, including and especially the legal section,
The member decides to leave the Program for any of the following: to enroll in school, because of dissatisfaction with the Program, to move to another location, to get married or to enter into a civil union, or to take a job or service position (unless the member certified at the beginning of their term of service that they were enrolled in a welfare-to-work or Reach-Up program upon enrolling in AmeriCorps),
During the term of service the member has been convicted of a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance,
The member has committed an offense in accordance with paragraphs 2 through 7 of section IV of this Agreement, or
Any other serious breach that in the judgment of the Program Director or Host Site Organization would: undermine the effectiveness of the Program, show blatant disrespect for any individual, or put any supervisor, staff, other member, self, organization, or program at risk or in harm's way.

The Program may release the member from the term of service for compelling personal circumstances if certain circumstances beyond the member’s control occur, and the member is able to provide documentation of the circumstances. For example:

The member has a serious injury or illness that makes completing the term of service impossible;
There is a serious injury, illness or death of an immediate family member and the member is needed to care for that family member or take over the duties of the family member;
The member is drafted by the Armed Services of the United States; or
Some other circumstance occurs that makes it impossible or very difficult for the member to complete the term of service and if and only if the VHCB Director deems that circumstance to be compelling. Any circumstance listed in paragraph 2 of this section will not be considered compelling.

The Program will suspend the member’s term of service for the following reasons:
during the term of service, the member has been charged with a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance.

during the term of service, the member has been convicted of a first offense of possession of a controlled substance. If the member, however, demonstrates that they have enrolled in an approved drug rehabilitation program, the member may be able to resume the term of service with approval from the VHCB AC Director and HSO.

The Program does not have documentation that the member is actively serving such as completed timesheets, required enrollment paperwork, or timely responses to communication from the Host Site or VHCB AC.

Any of the following issues arise and will take time for corrective action:
A personal issue arises with the member;
an issue or disagreement arises between the member and HSO, the member and the Program, or the member and a client or volunteer; or,
an issue arises at the host site such as funding loss or change in staff.

If the member discontinues their term of service for any reason other than a release for compelling personal circumstances as described in paragraph 3, the member will cease to receive the benefits described in section III and will receive no portion of the education award or interest payments.

If the member discontinues their term of service due to compelling personal circumstances as described in paragraph 3 of this section of this Agreement, the member will cease to receive benefits as described in Section III. If, however, the member has completed at least 15% of the required service hours (255 for full-time or 135 for half-time), the member will receive a pro-rated portion of the education award or interest payments described in section III.

The Program may release the member for cause if, in the opinion of the Program Director, the member’s conduct undermines the effectiveness of the Program or an assigned project, or the member repeatedly or periodically continues to demonstrate inappropriate behavior by engaging in a pattern of misconduct or not complying with corrective action plans.

A term that ends early, either for cause, or for compelling personal circumstances, is still considered a term and the education award that a member receives, or would have been eligible to receive, will count in determining the maximum amount of education award benefits that individuals may receive through service with AmeriCorps.

VI. Grievance Procedure (see Appendix II)

The member understands that the Program has a “grievance procedure” to resolve disputes concerning the member’s suspension, dismissal, service evaluation or proposed service assignment.
The member understands that, as a participant of the Program they may file a grievance in accordance with the Program’s grievance procedure.

VII. Program Responsibilities to Members

select all members in an impartial and nondiscriminatory manner that bolsters VHCB/AmeriCorps’ vision of diversity;

provide members with approved handbooks, documents, and forms needed to follow the provisions of VHCB/AmeriCorps and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993;

provide members with the orientation, training, technical assistance, and supervision necessary to complete their service activities and to grow and develop as citizens, community problem-solvers, and developing leaders;

provide opportunity for the member to create service projects in conjunction with their HSO so that the members will have productive and useful service projects in human needs and/or the environment;

structure service schedules to ensure that members will be reasonably able to perform 1,720 hours of service within twelve months (or the total amount of hours in their term in a reasonable amount of time);

treat all members with respect and provide them with the guidance, support, and discipline they reasonably require to perform VHCB AC service; and

provide and/or encourage other additional support and services to encourage success in the Program.

VIII. Amendments to This Agreement

This Agreement may be changed or revised by written consent of all parties (VHCB, VHCB AC, HSO as appropriate and Member).

IX. Certification

By signing this agreement, the member certifies that:

If they have served in a previous AmeriCorps program of any type, and/or if they were released for cause from a previous AmeriCorps term, those facts have been disclosed to the Program Director.
They understand that the law places restrictions on the purposes for which the education award can be used and that generally its redemption is limited to qualified loans covered by Title IV of the Education Act of 1965 and cannot be transferred to another person or used to pay off general loans even if those loans were used to pay education expenses. They further understands that they cannot be given a cash payment in lieu of an education award administered by the National Service Trust.

They understand that by signing this Agreement, they are making a commitment to complete the full term of service and that the receipt of the education award is contingent upon the successful completion of the full term of service. If they should choose to leave before the completion of the service, regardless of how many hours have been completed, and the situation is not deemed a compelling personal circumstance by the Director, then they are not eligible for any part of the education award.

They understand that they are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and is not eligible for overtime pay. For example, they are not eligible for overtime pay for time served in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or forty (40) hours in a week although such times does count toward completing the required term of service. They also understand that they are not eligible for unemployment compensation as no employer/employee relationship exists and since the position is a contractual one with stated starting and finishing dates.

They understand they are not a Federal employee and that they do not obtain any special status with respect to seeking a Federal job on the basis of having successfully completed a term of service.

They understand that this Program is subject to the availability of government funds and that should those funds become unavailable, the Program would be terminated and this agreement made null and void. It is further understood that the Program may be subject to a temporary shutdown in the event of a Government shut-down.

They understand that member information is kept confidential and may only be released to authorized recipients (e.g., SerVermont, AmeriCorps, or its Inspector General) or as required by law (e.g., as pursuant to a subpoena or search warrant). An exception to this overall rule is that the VHCB AC Program may use your name or photograph in a limited way for newsletter, publicity or promotional purposes only and that this notification constitutes informed consent to do so. VHCB AC may also release aggregate or other non-identifying information about members.

They are eligible to be enrolled in the National Service Trust; and will use the Education Award as described in this Agreement. To be eligible to be enrolled in the National Service Trust:

individuals may not serve more than four (4) terms of service. The 4 terms include incomplete terms in which members served more than 15% of total hours, regardless of the reason for not completing service; and incomplete terms in which members served for less than 15% of total hours and were released for misconduct.
X. Authorization

The member and Program hereby acknowledge by their signatures that they have read, understand, and agree to all terms and conditions of this Agreement, including the nine appendices:

I.) Public Notice of Non-Discrimination
II.) Grievance Procedure
III.) Drug-Free Workplace Notice
IV.) Policies page
V.) Criminal History Background Checks
VI.) Confidentiality, Reporting Abuse, Reporting Accidents
VII.) 45 CFR §2540.100(e)-(f)
VIII.) 45 CFR §2520.40-.45, and,
IX.) AmeriCorps Member Position Description.

VHCB AC AmeriCorps Member:___________________________________
Signature_________________________________  Date______________

VHCB Host Site Representative:_________________________________
Signature_________________________________  Date______________

VHCB AC Program Director:_____________________
Signature_________________________________  Date_______________

VHCB Administrative Officer:____________________________________
Signature_________________________________  Date________________
APPENDIX I to the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Agreement

Public Notice of Nondiscrimination

It is against the law for organizations that receive federal financial assistance from AmeriCorps to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, age, political affiliation, or, in most programs, religion. It is also unlawful to retaliate against any person or organization who files a complaint about such discrimination.

In addition to filing a complaint with local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, you may bring a complaint to the attention of the Corporation for National Service. If you believe that you or others have been discriminated against, or if you want more information, contact:

Francis Sharpstene  
AmeriCorps Program Director  
Vermont Housing and Conservation Board  
58 E. State St.  
Montpelier VT 05602  

Phone: (802) 828-3253  
State TTY/TDD relay #: 1-800-253-0191  
Fax: (802) 828-3254  
E-mail: francis@vhcb.org

or

Equal Opportunity Office  
Corporation for National Service  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20525  
(202) 606-5000, ext. 312 (voice); (202) 565-2799 (TTY/TDD)  
(202) 565-2816 (FAX); eo@cns.gov (e-mail)
VHCB AmeriCorps

APPENDIX II to the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Agreement

VHCB AC Grievance Procedure

This organization respects its members as adults, and expects them to take responsibility for their own behavior and actions. When we have a problem with your behavior or actions, we will follow the appropriate procedure as outlined in the Member Agreement. When you have a problem with the behavior of another member, staff person, the Program or a community person, we expect you to bring up the problem to the appropriate person, and follow the appropriate procedure. The first step to resolving any dispute is to talk it over directly with the party involved.

If you have a problem that is affecting your ability to serve, to honor your commitment to communities, your statewide team, yourself and/or the VHCB AC, TRY TO WORK IT OUT, NOT WALK OUT.

HINT: If you want or expect a response or follow-up, always put your concern and the facts (when, who, where, what) as you know them, in writing, date when you write it, and ask for a response in a reasonable time frame. Keep a copy for yourself, and give to the person who is first in-line to respond (often your site supervisor). Why document? It is easier to make sure that all the information is given, it helps ensure that a response is given in a timely manner (especially if it is dated), it helps to clarify what is the problem, what is the expectation, and what has been done to remedy it already.

In case of problems with another member, a community member, or a member of the staff of your HSO (not your supervisor):

1. Set up a time to talk with that person. You might want to write down what happened and how you felt as a result of it (when this happened, I felt....), and what you expect from the other party (an explanation, an apology, etc....). Try to work it out between yourselves, first. Don’t let it build into a bigger problem.
2. If you need help, talk to your site supervisor and see what they can do to help.
3. If this doesn’t work, continue as outlined below.

In case of problems with your site supervisor:

1. Set up a time to talk it over with your supervisor, stating specifically what is bothering you, how it affects you, and what you expect for a response from them that would help resolve the issue. Don’t let it simmer and create resentment.
2. If you aren’t able to resolve the problem after meeting, state your problem in writing and send it to the Program Director of VHCB AC. S/he will proceed as outlined below.

In case of problems with the VHCB AC:
1. Discuss the problem with your site supervisor and see if they can help resolve the problem.

2. If you can’t get resolution from your supervisor, write your problem down, define what it is you have a problem about, what you would like for a response, date it and send it to the VHCB AmeriCorps Program Director. The Director will get back to you in writing after investigating and researching related program information and/or considering your request in the context of the whole Program. After receiving a written response, you can speak with the Director about it. They will postdate a response to you within twelve working days of receipt of your correspondence.

3. If you aren’t satisfied after receiving the Director’s response, you can then write to Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, 58 E. State St., Montpelier, VT. 05602, the VHCB AC Sponsor.

The grievance procedure is as follows:

1. Attempt to settle the matter with the party involved directly.

2. If you cannot settle the matter directly, notify your site supervisor, VHCB AmeriCorps Program Director, and/or the ACM and discuss the problem with them. They can help you to clarify your concerns and strategize to reach a resolution. If the problem is with your site supervisor, specify your problem in writing and submit it to the VHCB AmeriCorps Program Director at the VHCB headquarters office.

3. If the issue is settled directly, a three-way meeting will be arranged: This meeting should include the ACM, the other party involved, and a neutral party appropriate to the situation. This may be the site supervisor or program director or other party depending on the circumstances of the problem. During this meeting the neutral party will facilitate a discussion to resolve the issue. An action plan to remedy the situation will be devised and implemented immediately.

4. Two-Week Follow Up: The facilitator/neutral party will follow up within two weeks to assess whether or not any improvement has been made.

5. Grievance Hearing: If the action plan is unsuccessful, you can file a written grievance with the Program Director (or designee, in the case of the program director being the neutral party in the informal dispute resolution process) who will hold a grievance hearing including other VHCB and/or AmeriCorps staff, provided that a request is made within one year of the date of the alleged occurrence (except in cases alleging fraud or criminal activity pursuant to 14 CFR § 2540.230). The grievance hearing will provide each side with an opportunity to present their position, and the Program Director will render a decision. The hearing must be held no later than 30 calendar days after the filing of the grievance, and a decision must be made no later than 60 calendar days after filing.

6. Mediation: Should a grievance hearing be unsuccessful or should it be determined more appropriate to replace the step of the grievance hearing, the Program will require the grievance to be presented to a trained mediator instead of or in addition to a grievance hearing. A neutral mediator will be designated by the Program, and will attempt to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution. The mediator must not
have participated in any previous decisions concerning the issue in dispute. Any and all mediation sessions will be confidential. The mediator may not participate in any subsequent proceedings. The mediation session should be facilitated no later than 30 days after the request is made, and an agreement must be reached within 45 days after filing. This step, whether in place of or in addition to a grievance hearing, is required before bringing the case to binding arbitration. The cost of mediation must be divided evenly between the parties.

7. Binding arbitration: In the event that the decision made following the grievance hearing is adverse to you or if no decision is made within 60 calendar days of the filing of the grievance, an opportunity for a binding arbitration will be provided. The arbitrator must be independent and selected by agreement of both you and the other party. If you and the other party cannot agree on an arbitrator, the Corporation’s Chief Executive Officer will appoint one within 15 calendar days after receiving a request from one of the parties.

An arbitration proceeding must be held no later than 45 calendar days after the request for arbitration, or no later than 30 calendar days after the appointment of an arbitrator by the Corporation’s CEO. An arbitration decision must be made no later than 30 calendar days after the commencement of the arbitration proceeding.

The cost of arbitration must be divided evenly between the parties, unless the grieved party prevails in an arbitration against the program, in which case the program must pay the total cost of the proceeding as well as the prevailing party’s attorney fees. A lawsuit to enforce an arbitration award may be brought in any Federal district court having jurisdiction over the parties.
APPENDIX III to the VHCB/VHCB AC Member Agreement

Drug-Free Workplace Notice

It shall be the policy of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to prohibit any VHCB employee or member of the VHCB AmeriCorps Program from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances in any work or service site. Printed information of the dangers of using drugs is available to all employees and members and is located in the VHCB library.

The following conditions are applicable to all employees of the VHCB, as well as members of its AmeriCorps program:

1. Members of the VHCB AC, as a condition of their service, are required to abide by the terms and conditions of the Drug-Free Workplace policy.

2. Any member convicted of a violation of any criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace shall be required to so notify the Executive Director of VHCB or the Program Director of VHCB AC within five days after such conviction. The Executive Director or Program Director is then required to notify the Federal grant agency of any such conviction within ten (10) days after receiving notice. Appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action will be taken by the VHCB within thirty (30) days after receiving notice of the conviction.

3. Any member convicted of a violation of any criminal drug statute in the workplace may be referred to the State of Vermont Employee Drug Assistance Program, through the Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (or other appropriate agency). This Program will provide assessment, screening and referrals to employees needing counseling and rehabilitation.

4. Any conviction for the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances in any VHCB workplace, or the failure to report any such conviction as required, will result in appropriate action against a member so convicted, up to and including immediate dismissal.

5. Each member shall make a good faith effort to maintain a drug-free workplace.
APPENDIX IV to the VHCB AmeriCorps Member Agreement

**VHCB AC POLICIES:**

**POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AT VHCB AC and SERVERMONT SPONSORED EVENTS**

Members are required to attend an average of 2 to 3 days per month for AmeriCorps-related activities: trainings, team-building days, retreats, and service and celebration days. Members are required to attend an Orientation with VHCB AmeriCorps and other trainings and events including but not limited to: Ropes Course, Cultural Competency, Leadership, the statewide AmeriCorps Launch and Spring Conference (both two-days), MLK Day of Service, Conflict Resolution and CPR/1st Aid, a Winter Gathering, a VHCB Service Day and the VHCB AC year-end Closing Celebration (dates all TBA), and all others as listed on the current Trainings and Events Calendar. Trainings and events listed are subject to change.

Member absences from the aforementioned trainings and events must be approved beforehand by the VHCB AC Director and, for SerVermont sponsored events, the Executive Director of SerVermont, via a written waiver request from the member and submitted to the VHCB AC Director. If a member registers for and does not attend a required training or event and has not received an attendance waiver for that event and does not notify the Program by the RSVP date, the member may incur the cost of their portion of the event and will be held responsible for paying the cost.

Members missing more than one of these days will violate this contract and therefore possibly their successful completion of the program (and receipt of their education award).

Members are ultimately responsible for getting themselves to these events and for arranging their own transportation. Carpooling is encouraged. VHCB AC will reimburse for mileage to these events at the rate of the current IRS rate, assuming members submit their mileage claims by the end of the month in which an expense is accrued. Members may count travel time as training/service hours up to 3 hours one-way maximum. Members will be allowed a total cumulative amount of 20 miles for reimbursement to complete Independent Service Projects and will not be reimbursed for additional miles required to complete projects.

**II. MEMBER HOURS/PAYROLL POLICY**

The compensation members receive is considered a “living allowance” rather than a “wage”, and this living allowance is not based on an hourly rate or paid out based on the exact number of hours served. However, the checks received from payroll are based on the number of pay periods that fall within a certain contracted service term. The amount per paycheck will be determined by the number of pay periods that fall within the contractually-agreed service term based on the maximum living allowance amount. The member understands that, if they choose or need to convert the original service term, they are not owed any difference in living allowance not paid prior to the conversion. If the member
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completes the term requirements and exits the Program early, they understand that they are not owed any portion of the unpaid living allowance. The member understands that, if they are not actively serving or unable to serve for more than two consecutive weeks, the member will be temporarily suspended from the Program and the living allowance payment will cease until the member has been reinstated.

The member also understands that the timesheet is the primary source of documentation for VHCB AmeriCorps to determine whether or not the member has been actively serving and what activities the member has been performing. The member understands that if they fail to submit timesheet by the timesheet due date, VHCB AmeriCorps will not have record of the member’s service activities and will assume the member has not been serving, in which case the member will be placed in suspension. When this occurs, living allowance payments are also suspended. The member will be reinstated once all timesheets have been submitted to VHCB AC in full, and corrective measures are in place to ensure future timesheets are submitted on time.

Note: If a member gets more than 20 hours behind in their targeted cumulative hours to date, they may be warned that they should address the problem in writing, with a plan to make up the hours. While VHCB AmeriCorps staff will track member hours deficits and issue warnings, it is ultimately the member’s responsibility to keep track of hours throughout the service term; this information will be available to members and supervisors through the OnCorps electronic system. Members must also realize that extending their service time beyond 12 months is strictly prohibited by AmeriCorps and will jeopardize their satisfactory completion of their service year and their education award.

Other policies relating to member hours include:
Members may never count more than 3 hours of travel one way to any service or training event.
Members may not count at least 8 hours worth of sleep time at overnight training events (an exception to this might be approved ahead of time if members will be responsible for supervising/chaperoning youth in an overnight camping event or responding to a disaster), and should also not count hours that they are neither serving or in the company of other team members.
Members should not count lunchtime as service time unless they are serving through lunch.

APPENDIX V

Criminal History Background Checks

Grant Provisions of the Corporation for National and Community Service as well as the VHCB AmeriCorps Program require all AmeriCorps members undergo a National Service Criminal History Check.

Information from background checks is confidential. If there are any findings, members are informed. There are procedures for expunging inaccurate or obsolete information and for appeals.
APPENDIX VI

Confidentiality, Reporting Abuse, Reporting Accidents, etc.

**Client confidentiality**: Information about a client/student/family may not be disclosed in a way that identifies the person.

**Mandated Reporting of Abuse, Exploitation, or Neglect**: As a member, you are not an employee of your site or VHCB AC but you are mandated to report any situations of suspected abuse, exploitation, or neglect immediately. Members must undergo a Mandated Reporter training as part of their VHCB AmeriCorps Orientation.

**Accident Reports for Workers' Compensation Insurance**: Members are covered under VHCB’s workers' compensation policy while serving and performing Program activities and services outlined in the member position description.

In case of an injury while performing VHCB AC activities, contact the VHCB AC Program Director immediately. An incident report should be completed and submitted within 36 hours. If your injury is life-threatening, seek medical help first.

The report is intended to capture information as soon after the incident as possible. If you have an accident but do not think you need medical attention, still contact the Program Director and fill out the report so it is available in case you need medical attention related to the incident at a later date.

Above all, members should consider safety issues before acting and not take necessary risks. (Note, the AmeriCorps Health Care Plan, and others like it, specifically state they do not cover injuries occurring while “on the job.”)

**Seat belts**: AmeriCorps members are required to wear seat belts while traveling and performing Program activities and services.

**Carpooling**: Carpooling is highly recommended and encouraged.

**Auto liability insurance**: A member must carry their own adequate liability coverage protecting their vehicle. In the event of an accident while performing Program activities and services, the member’s private insurance is the primary payer.

**Media and publicity release**: I hereby give permission for the VHCB AmeriCorps Program to use my name and/or my photograph in any media form, written or electronic, without payment or other consideration. I release VHCB AmeriCorps from any liability in connection with the use of my name or photograph in the media for publicity purpose support activities.
APPENDIX VII
45 CFR §2540.100(e)-(f) What restrictions govern the use of Corporation assistance?
(e) Nonduplication. Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a Program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.
(f) Nondisplacement. (1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.

APPENDIX VIII
45 CFR §2520.40-.45 Under what circumstances may AmeriCorps members in my Program raise resources?
(a) Members may raise resources directly in support of your Program's service activities.
(b) Examples of fundraising activities members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:
   (1) Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
   (2) Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
   (3) Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
   (4) 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;
   (5) Seeking donations from alumni of the Program for specific service projects being performed by current members.
(c) Members may not:
   (1) Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
   (2) Write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.
[70 FR 39597, July 8, 2005]

APPENDIX IX
Member Position Description

The members understand that they must sign a Member Position Description (PD), developed by the Host Site or Program and approved by VHCB AC. Once approved and signed by the member, the PD will become Appendix IX of this agreement. This Member Agreement, which incorporated the Member Position Description, sets for the expectations, responsibilities, and duties for the service term.
The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has zero tolerance for the harassment of any individual or group of individuals for any reason. CNCS is committed to treating all persons with dignity and respect. CNCS prohibits all forms of discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. All programs administered by, or receiving Federal financial assistance from CNCS, must be free from all forms of harassment. Whether in CNCS offices or campuses, in other service-related settings such as training sessions or service sites, or at service-related social events, such harassment is unacceptable. Any such harassment, if found, will result in immediate corrective action, up to and including removal or termination of any CNCS employee or volunteer. Recipients of Federal financial assistance, be they individuals, organizations, programs and/or projects are also subject to this zero tolerance policy. Where a violation is found, and subject to regulatory procedures, appropriate corrective action will be taken, up to and including termination of Federal financial assistance from all Federal sources.

Slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual’s gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or any other basis constitute harassment when it has the purpose or effect of interfering with service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive service environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to: explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors; pressure for dates; deliberate touching, leaning over, or cornering; offensive teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions; letters, phone calls, or distribution or display of offensive materials; offensive looks or gestures; gender, racial, ethnic, or religious baiting; physical assaults or other threatening behavior; or demeaning, debasing or abusive comments or actions that intimidate.

CNCS does not tolerate harassment by anyone including persons of the same or different races, sexes, religions, or ethnic origins; or from a CNCS employee or supervisor; a project, or site employee or supervisor; a non-employee (e.g., client); a co-worker or service member.

I expect supervisors and managers of CNCS programs and projects, when made aware of alleged harassment by employees, service participants, or other individuals, to immediately take swift and appropriate action. CNCS will not tolerate retaliation against a person who raises harassment concerns in good faith. Any CNCS employee who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, and any grantee that permits harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to a finding of non-compliance and administrative procedures that may result in termination of Federal financial assistance from CNCS and all other Federal agencies.

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in violation of civil rights laws, regulations, or this policy, or in retaliation for opposition to discrimination or participation in discrimination complaint proceedings (e.g., as a complainant or witness) in any CNCS program or project, may raise his or her concerns with our Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness (OCRI). Discrimination claims not brought to the attention of OCRI within 45 days of their occurrence may not be accepted in a formal complaint of discrimination. No one can be required to use a program, project or sponsor dispute resolution procedure before contacting OCRI. If another procedure is used, it does not affect the 45-day time limit. OCRI may be reached at (202) 606-7503 (voice), (202) 606-3472 (TTY), eo@cns.gov, or through http://www.nationalservice.gov/.