



## What you need to know before joining AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service program much like the Peace Corps, but for the United States. Members serve a term of service in an impacted community and receive a living allowance, some benefits, and an education award. There are AmeriCorps programs all over the U.S. Rural Action's Ohio Stream Restore Corps, OUHCOM's COMCorps, and Ohio History Service Corps are local programs. Members are placed by programs into positions at "sponsor organizations" (like Rural Action) and other partner organizations. Programs handle the distribution of living allowance and the training calendar, but host sites manage the day to day activities and special events.

Some parts of National Service are unique to the program where members are serving, while other experiences (like swearing in as members and using [my.americorps.gov](http://my.americorps.gov) for all education award management) are standard for all AmeriCorps members.

### Can I Join If I'm Not a Citizen?

For AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps NCCC you must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or legal permanent resident alien of the United States to be an AmeriCorps member.

### How does it work?

1. You serve 1,700 hours in one term of service, between 10 and 12 months, depending on the program and site. A 12 month term works out to about 35 hours/week, BUT:
2. Many host sites have a variable schedule based on seasonal sampling, summer daycamps and field trips, events, and weather. AmeriCorps members can have a 2<sup>nd</sup> job or go to college part time, but it can be challenging to schedule around service.
3. Members receive:
  - Living allowance: \$13,992 annually. Federal, state, and locally taxable (so about \$1,000 monthly after taxes; can file a return).
    - Members are eligible to apply for food stamps, Medicaid, and PIPP if the living allowance is their only income.
  - Segal AmeriCorps Education Award: \$6,095.00 at end of successful term; For FEDERAL student loans, or for future post-secondary education.
    - Can receive up to twice, if you complete a second AmeriCorps term.
    - Members can also place federal loans into forbearance during service.
  - Health plans are provided. They vary by program, but most members are eligible for Medicaid.

- Childcare subsidy for children of AmeriCorps member, paid to eligible child care providers (income-based)
- Program-level reimbursements: Training, Mileage, and Equipment budgets up to \$1,400 total.

4. Members are expected to accrue 255 training hours (15% of total time): For your service and for your post-AmeriCorps employability!

- Some training events provided but does not meet all hours; you must seek out more training
- Some trainings mandatory, e.g. Orientation and overnight retreat (March)

5. This is a rural program, so there is lots of driving. Members must have a reliable form of transportation and must budget mileage carefully.

- Our programs do not provide housing, but we can help you find a place relatively close to your service site.

6. AmeriCorps trains you to be a paperwork master. There is lots of reporting: Timesheets, monthly reports, service reflections, Quarterly surveys and evaluations, and regular site visits.

7. If you are offered a position, service is contingent on a “clean” background check:

- Any convictions for murder or sexual offenses make you ineligible for AmeriCorps service
- Disclose everything; Hits for convictions you didn’t mention make you ineligible
- Depending on the program, you may have to run the background check yourself, or attend a background check session.

8. Things you can’t do (“disallowable activities”) during service hours:

- General or Federal fundraising
- Lobbying or political activism
- Endorsing or influencing legislation, a candidate, or an election
- Anything not in your member position description

9. Service is NOT a Job!

- No unemployment
- Does not pay into Social Security

## Questions?

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