



# AmeriCorps

## NCCC



# MEMBER HANDBOOK

## JANUARY 2025

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AmeriCorps NCCC

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Washington, DC 20525

[AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov)

Upon request, this material will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Overview of AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve our communities and country through two programs: AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors. Working with national and community nonprofits, faith-based groups, schools, and local agencies, AmeriCorps engages more than 5 million Americans each year in meeting critical needs in education, the environment, public safety, disaster services, and other areas.

AmeriCorps is working to foster a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America and to help all Americans answer the President's call to service.

There are four branches of AmeriCorps:

- AmeriCorps State and National, a federal grant program through which members serve with national nonprofit organizations like Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, and Teach for America, as well as with hundreds of smaller community organizations, both secular and faith based.
- AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), a team-based program for adults age 18-24, who serve out of one of four regional campuses located in Vicksburg, MS; Aurora, CO; Sacramento, CA; and Vinton, IA, and serve full-time for approximately 10 months, living and serving together as a team.
- AmeriCorps VISTA, a program focused on fighting poverty.
- AmeriCorps Seniors, taps the skills, talents, and experience of more than half a million Americans age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community needs. The Volunteer Generation Fund and Nonprofit Capacity Building Program are all designed to increase the capacity and scale of impact for grantee organizations.

In exchange for a successful year of service, AmeriCorps members earn a modest living allowance and an education award, equal in value to the Federal Pell Grant, which can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans.

## Overview of AmeriCorps NCCC

AmeriCorps NCCC's mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through service. AmeriCorps NCCC values diversity and emphasizes a spirit of inclusion. To effectively serve different communities across the U.S., NCCC depends on

diversity among its Corps Members, Team Leaders, and staff to fulfill its mission.

In NCCC, as with the communities it serves, members will work alongside people with different social, economic, ethnic, political and religious backgrounds, as well as having different sexual orientations, gender expressions, educational experiences, and physical and mental abilities. There will be differing viewpoints, feelings, perspectives, and values. Corps members, Team Leaders and staff are expected to be respectful of others at all times, even when they disagree with one another. Corps members, Team Leaders and staff are expected to ensure that everyone entering the program feels welcome and is included in the NCCC community.

## Program Description

AmeriCorps NCCC members work in teams of approximately 10 members on projects related to: natural and other disasters, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, energy conservation, and urban and rural development. These AmeriCorps NCCC teams complete projects that typically last from six to 12 weeks, infusing essential human resources and serving people in every state. Because members are trained and can be assigned new duties on short notice, they are particularly well-suited to meet the nation's disaster needs.

Approximately 85 percent of projects require teams to live and serve in communities away from the AmeriCorps NCCC campus. AmeriCorps NCCC's flexible program structure allows both the opportunity to partner with non-profit or government organizations, and the ability to create strategic collaborations with other national service programs and federal agencies to magnify the impact on communities served.

Typical NCCC Service Activities:

- leading youth development activities
- constructing and rehabilitating low-income housing
- trail building and environmental restoration
- assisting in disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery effort
- addressing other pressing local needs

Project sponsors include national, community, and faith based nonprofit organizations; municipal and state governments; federal agencies; parks; and schools. National partners include the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the U.S. Forest Service.



## FEMA Corps

In 2012, AmeriCorps NCCC collaborated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and created a new AmeriCorps NCCC service track called the NCCC-FEMA Corps. FEMA Corps members are solely devoted to disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, and promote an ethic of national service, strengthens the federal government's disaster capabilities, and expands educational and economic opportunities for young people. FEMA Corps members must be U.S. Citizens between the ages of 18-24, with no upper age limit for Team Leaders.

### Program Description:

FEMA Corps members engage in a variety of disaster work including supporting disaster services facilities, responding to helpline calls, and disseminating disaster preparedness and mitigation information to the public. 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 while positively impacting the lives of disaster victims.

### Program Expectations:

FEMA Corps members must comply with all applicable FEMA policies while serving in the FEMA Corps Program. Members will act in accordance with, and abide by, the rules and procedures established by FEMA and its duly authorized representatives and will also cooperate with FEMA's

Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) in investigations regarding any harassment or discrimination complaint taking place during their term of service. While deployed, FEMA Corps members will comply with all provided technical direction by FEMA, to include work assignments and tasks; health, safety, and security protocols; systems access, equipment, and facility or agency policies and others, as appropriate.

### Typical FEMA Corps Service Activities:

- helping survivors complete applications for disaster assistance
- educating communities, assessing needs, and collecting information
- developing promotional public disaster preparedness materials
- ordering materials, tracking inventory, loading supplies, and managing IT equipment
- updating electronic files, managing data, and compiling reports
- coordinating disaster survivor services by partnering with nonprofits and government agencies
- assessing and reporting damage to public facilities
- setting up shelter operations and re-unification of families and pets



## Forest Corps

In 2023, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) invited AmeriCorps NCCC to co-create the NCCC Forest Corps, one of the Keystone Partnerships in the new American Climate Corps. AmeriCorps NCCC's mission to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service aligns well with the U.S. Forest Service's mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. NCCC Forest Corps members will fulfill their commitment to national service to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement by working to enhance forest resiliency and confront the wildfire crisis. Forest Corps members are assigned to environmental and conservation projects while promoting an ethic of national service, increasing available trained individual conservation leaders, and expanding career opportunities in conservation. Forest Corps members must be U.S. Citizens between the ages of 18-26, with no upper age limit for Team Leaders.

### Program Description:

Forest Corps members engage in a variety of conservation projects to address the urgent need to help reduce wildfire risk to critical infrastructure, protect communities, and make forests more resilient. The projects members' support will help maintain appropriate forest cover, achieve desired ecological conditions, and restore forests and grasslands for wildlife, recreational experiences, and cultural heritage preservation. Certifications, trainings, and experiences prepare members for

careers in conservation, fire management, climate mitigation, and others. Members can expect to leave the program with a deeper understanding of how fire management and reforestation fit into the broader conservation context, in addition to tangible skills.

### Program Expectations:

Forest Corps members must comply with all applicable USFS policies and procedures if serving in the NCCC Forest Corps. Members will comply with all USFS-provided technical direction while actively engaged on projects, to include work assignments and tasks; health, safety, and security protocols; systems access, equipment and facility/agency policies and others, as appropriate, unless the member believes it is against the law or policy or creates a health and/or safety risk.

### Typical FEMA Corps Service Activities May Include:

- Wildfire Risk Mitigation: Burn preparation, prescribed burning, and fire effects monitoring.
- Reforestation: Providing plant nursery services, reforestation needs assessments, planning, implementation/monitoring, tree maintenance, measurements, and data collection.
- Resource Management: Infrastructure and trail maintenance, wildlife surveys, wetland restoration, GIS mapping, resource monitoring, and conservation education.
- Wildfire Suppression Incident Response: Occasionally, teams may be deployed to wildlife suppression or disaster response and recovery.





## Team Leaders

Team Leaders, under the leadership, direction, and guidance of the Unit Leader, are responsible for the general safety, well-being, performance, and personal development of the Corps members on the campus of origin. Team Leaders will:

- meet the Core Expectations for Corps members and Team Leaders
- supervise, motivate and direct teams
- act as liaison between the Corps member and Unit Leader (or Unit Department)
- support adherence to, and ensure team compliance with, all AmeriCorps NCCC policies and procedures
- supervise team housing, meals and other activities
- support team cohesion through conflict mediation, and crisis intervention
- maintain team order, develop team morale, foster team work, ensure safety, and monitor and report on the standards of performance and behavior of the team
- assist and support team personal, professional and leadership development through regular assessments
- conduct regular team meetings to provide feedback on service projects
- manage administrative, financial, reporting, and personal matters for the team, to include reporting, support, and liaison functions related to illness and family emergencies
- represent AmeriCorps NCCC to the media as appropriate
- supervise members during project rounds and transitions
- coordinate deployment logistics with AmeriCorps NCCC Unit Leaders



# AMERICORPS NCCC POLICIES

To enter AmeriCorps NCCC is to become a member of a community. Choosing to become a member of this community implies a commitment to maintaining an environment in which both community and individual goals can be attained. Acceptance as a member of this community is a privilege; sharing in the maintenance of this community is a responsibility. As such, all members are expected to abide by the AmeriCorps NCCC Code of Conduct.

NCCC values diversity and emphasizes a spirit of inclusion. As we strive to serve different communities across the U.S., we cannot deliver on our mission without diversity amongst our Corps members, Team Leaders and staff. In NCCC, as with the communities it serves, members will work alongside people with different social, economic, ethnic, political and religious backgrounds, as well as having different sexual orientations, gender expressions, educational experiences, and physical and mental abilities.

There will be differing viewpoints, feelings, perspectives, and values. Corps members, Team Leaders and staff are expected to be respectful of others at all times, even when they disagree with one another. Corps members, Team Leaders and staff are expected to ensure that everyone entering the program feels welcome and is included in the NCCC community.

## About This Handbook

The policies in this handbook apply to all participants in the AmeriCorps NCCC program. As used in this handbook, the term “member” means “members and Team Leaders,” unless the context otherwise requires.

## Rights and Responsibilities

### A. Basic Rights

All members have the right to:

- serve, work, and learn in an atmosphere free from disrespect, harassment, and discrimination of any individual or group of individuals. AmeriCorps prohibits all forms of discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, marital or parental status, military service, or political affiliation.
- be recognized and treated as responsible and capable adults who are willing and able to accept responsibility, both individually and as team members.

- provide input to region staff concerning program issues.
- have grievances and complaints heard and answered in a consistent and timely manner.
- have reason(s) for transfers, terminations, and other significant actions clearly stated in writing.
- appeal inter-regional transfers and dismissal decisions to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC.

### B. Voting, Electoral & Lobbying Activities

#### 1. Local or Absentee Voting

NCCC region staff will facilitate AmeriCorps NCCC members' ability to vote, either locally or by absentee ballot.

#### 2. Voting Procedures

NCCC region staff may provide assistance on voting procedures, for example, by arranging for absentee ballots to be marked in private, and arranging transportation within a reasonable distance (in the local area) from the campus to polls when necessary. AmeriCorps Employees are subject to the Hatch Act, and are not permitted to engage in partisan political activity.

#### 3. Political Activities

Individuals may engage in political activities while off duty. They may actively campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections, participate in political rallies and meetings, and hold office in political clubs or parties. Members are prohibited from engaging in political activities while wearing the AmeriCorps NCCC uniform (or any part that identifies the member as an AmeriCorps NCCC member). Members may not use government vehicles for the purpose of engaging in or travelling to or from any partisan political activity, event, or political rally.

#### 4. Prohibited Activities

Individuals may not use any authority to coerce, attempt to direct, or advise another member to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to anyone for political purposes. No member may display posters, stickers, buttons, etc., that have a partisan theme while serving, regardless of location, or while wearing the AmeriCorps NCCC uniform. Individuals may not represent themselves as speaking or writing on behalf of AmeriCorps NCCC & AmeriCorps.

Individuals may not participate in partisan political activity as part of service or duties, or when such activities would be perceived as part of the member's duties. AmeriCorps NCCC is a service program designed to address national and community needs. Our enabling legislation states that NCCC is a program of individuals from diverse backgrounds, and our NCCC oath states that members will find common ground. NCCC is a federal program, and, as such, is not affiliated with a political party or partisan politics. To be as effective as possible in pursuing our mission across a nation with a wide range of political opinions, NCCC members must ensure that they do not engage in partisan political politics in ways that might be attributed to the NCCC program.

AmeriCorps NCCC members are encouraged to hold and develop strong personal opinions in their personal capacity. However, while operating in an official capacity, NCCC members must refrain from advocating for and/or endorsing political candidates and parties, positions, issues, and themes that may result in the NCCC program being viewed as one that holds or espouses a particular partisan or political position or perspective. To do so ensures that the NCCC program is sustainable across administrations and can reach all communities in need, regardless of political creed.

## C. Rights Related to Religion

### 1. Opportunity to Worship

AmeriCorps NCCC members will be provided the opportunity to worship (or not to worship) as they choose. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide access to religious services for members serving in remote locations, including AmeriCorps NCCC campuses where public transportation is not readily available. Any requests for religious accommodation should be submitted to the Region Director.

### 2. Religious Activities

Individuals will not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any other religious activity as part of the member's service or duties, or when such activities would be perceived as part of the member's service or duties. This does not preclude members from engaging in religious activities (e.g., Bible studies) in the dormitories or other AmeriCorps NCCC buildings during non-service hours.

No religious instruction, worship, proselytization, or other religious activity will be conducted as part of a project to which individuals are assigned. If members choose to participate in a sponsor-led religious activity (e.g. starting the day with a prayer), members may wear the AmeriCorps NCCC uniform.

## D. Reasonable Accommodations

NCCC is required by law to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified members with disabilities or a sincerely held religious belief. A reasonable accommodation (RA) is any change in the NCCC service environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help a member in performing the duties or expectations of national service with AmeriCorps NCCC. Accommodation requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, appropriate requests are granted unless doing so would result in undue hardship to the agency.

### Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Making existing facilities readily accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, including computer software and hardware, appropriate adjustments or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers and/or interpreters and other similar accommodations.

### 1. Ways to Request Reasonable Accommodations:

- Complete the RA form on the Member Wellness Resources Page. QR Code below.
- Verbally or in writing to any NCCC employee. An NCCC member may request an RA at any time during their service term.
- If known, include what type of RA is being requested.
- Provide as much information as possible to support the accommodation request.
- Additional information may be requested to certify accommodation needs of the requesting member.



### 2. Communicating the Final Decision on an RA Request

Once the RA request has been reviewed, the National Director will issue a written decision to grant, deny, or offer an alternative accommodation than the one requested. The decision by the Director cannot be appealed by the candidate or member.

For any denial of an accommodation, members may file an equal opportunity complaint within 45 days of the denial with AmeriCorps' Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, if they believe the denial of an accommodation was discriminatory. A candidate or member is not required to accept an RA. However, if the candidate or member needs an RA to perform a core function of NCCC service or to eliminate a direct threat, and refuses to accept an effective accommodation, they may not be qualified to serve in NCCC.

## E. Rights to Privacy

### 1. Member Records

The Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §552a), and AmeriCorps' implementing regulations at 45 C.F.R. Part 2508, gives citizens the right of privacy regarding records maintained on them personally by AmeriCorps NCCC and/or AmeriCorps. It also gives them appropriate access to the member's own records, including adequate opportunity to correct errors in the member's record. This right applies to systems of records that contain personal data, where an individual can be located by name or an assigned personal identifier. Each Region Director is ultimately responsible for the maintenance and safeguarding of AmeriCorps NCCC members' records but may delegate operational tasks to others.

### 2. Disclosure of Personal Information

The Privacy Act generally prohibits disclosure of personal information from these systems of records to an individual (other than the subject of the record) or to another agency without the express written consent of the subject of the record, or the person's agent or attorney. However, there are exceptions to this prohibition. These exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- disclosure to officers or employees of AmeriCorps who have a need for such information in the official performance of the member's duties
- disclosure to any agency of the federal or a state government for civil or criminal law enforcement purposes, in accordance with established procedures (e.g., the Federal Bureau of Investigation)
- under emergency conditions that affect an individual's health or safety

A complete list of routine uses is published with AmeriCorps's System of Records Notices.

### 3. Disclosure of Medical Information

Medical information may not be disclosed to anyone, including other AmeriCorps NCCC members, except under the following circumstances:

- Supervisors and managers within the AmeriCorps NCCC may be informed if the condition presents

a threat to the safety or welfare of the individual or other members of AmeriCorps NCCC.

- Supervisors and managers may be informed regarding necessary restrictions on the work or duties of the individual and any necessary accommodations.
- First aid and any relevant safety personnel may be informed, when appropriate, if the medical condition (or illness/injury) could affect emergency treatment.
- Government officials investigating compliance with the Rehabilitation Act shall be provided relevant information upon request.
- Some other laws and requirements authorize disclosure. For example, state and federal public health requirements include reporting recently diagnosed cases of certain contagious diseases, and the AmeriCorps NCCC health benefits plan may require medical information in order to resolve issues concerning pre-existing conditions.
- Region staff (Region Director/designee) who are making medical hold determinations.
- Health Services Unit staff who are managing medical holds/making recommendations to the Region Director/designee.

The Region Director is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of these records.

## F. Searches & Seizures

### 1. Searches by AmeriCorps NCCC Staff

Region staff will comply with Fourth Amendment requirements when there is a need to search a member's room for evidence of a crime or for illegal items. Searches will be conducted pursuant to a search warrant issued by a judge, magistrate, or consistent with an established exception to the warrant requirement, such as a consent search, a search under urgent circumstances, a search incident to an arrest, or seizing evidence in plain view. Searches are to be distinguished from administrative inspections where AmeriCorps NCCC staff may enter rooms to inspect for health and safety purposes, including prohibited items, etc. Refusal to allow staff entry to conduct administrative inspections may be grounds for further disciplinary action.

### 2. Searches by Law Enforcement Officials

AmeriCorps NCCC staff and members do not have the authority to consent, on any member's behalf, to the search of that member's room, vehicle, or other possessions by law enforcement officials.



If law enforcement officials request AmeriCorps NCCC staff for permission to search a room, the staff member will advise them that they must comply with the requirements of the law of search and seizure. However, AmeriCorps NCCC staff will not attempt to physically prevent law enforcement personnel from searching a specific area. Whenever possible, the Region Director will be immediately notified of the request by law enforcement officials.

### 3. Roommates

Roommates who allow or tolerate the evidence of a crime (including illegal drugs) in the member's room, by roommates or others, subject themselves to the possibility that all of the member's private possessions in that room may be searched, and they may be prosecuted for any stolen goods or illegal substances found in the member's possession. Roommates may authorize law enforcement officers, official inspectors, or anyone else to enter rooms shared in common, and a successful prosecution may result from the observation and subsequent seizure of evidence of a crime that is in plain view. However, a roommate may not consent to the search of, or waive a fellow member's right to the privacy of, a desk, bureau, trunk, or other presumptively private container not shared in common.

## G. Non-Discrimination

AmeriCorps is committed to the notion that all persons serving in the AmeriCorps NCCC program be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of non-merit factors such as race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.

To that end, AmeriCorps is committed to environments and service sites being free of all forms of harassment and discrimination. Slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other protected basis constitute harassment under law when it has the purpose or effect of interfering with service performance or the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive service environment.

## H. Harassment

Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct directed at an individual or group based on color, national origin, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), religion, age, disability, political affiliation, military service, or genetic information (including family medical history) resulting in the interference with

service performance and/or exposure to offensive, intimidating, or hostile environments. 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, social media content, or distribution or display of offensive materials
- offensive looks or gestures; gender, racial, ethnic, or religious baiting; physical assaults or other threatening behavior
- demeaning, debasing, and abusive comments or actions that intimidate; the comments or actions must be unwelcome

Harassment may be by persons of the same or different races, sexes, religions, or ethnic origins. It may be carried out by another service member, a sponsoring organization staff member, a project or site employee or supervisor, or another program beneficiary such as a client. Conduct directed at one member may create an offensive environment for other members. Sexual Harassment is discussed in further detail on page 20.

It is also unlawful for a sponsoring organization to retaliate against an AmeriCorps member serving with NCCC who complains of harassment, regardless of whether or not the sponsoring organization believes the underlying complaint is valid. It is also unlawful for a sponsoring organization to retaliate against an AmeriCorps member who testifies or participates in any way in a harassment investigation, proceeding, or litigation.

An AmeriCorps member in the NCCC program who believes they have been subject to illegal discrimination may contact the AmeriCorps Civil Rights & Employment Branch (CRE) of the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (ODEIA), which offers an impartial discrimination complaint resolution process. It is unlawful to retaliate against an individual for making a complaint or participating in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to illegal discrimination.

CRE may be contacted by mail:

**250 E St. SW, Suite 300,  
Washington, DC 20525;**

by phone: **(202) 606-7503;** or

by the Civil Rights Hotline: **(202) 606 3461** or

by e-mail to: **eo@americorps.gov**

## Core Expectations

NCCC is a rigorous national service program. Members receive support from NCCC staff, one another, partners of sponsoring organizations, residents of the communities with whom they serve, as well as friends and family at home. While there is a strong support network in place, NCCC members will be fully responsible for their success in the program.

### The Basics

Members will be expected to:

- comply with the NCCC Member Handbook
- participate in all required elements of the NCCC program including:
  - Community service projects
  - NCCC and sponsor delivered trainings
  - Project debriefs
  - Physical training
  - Any other mandatory events as determined by NCCC staff
- Refrain from the illegal use of alcohol and drugs (e.g. marijuana)
- Submit to random drug testing
- Promote your safety and the safety of your teammates
- Take responsibility of your health and well-being
- Serve in high stress environments

### Service Related

Members will be expected to:

- Deploy to any approved location and/or project.
- Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to sudden and unexpected changes to your service and/or living environments.
- Complete service assignments that may vary greatly, to include tasks completed in office settings, as well as manual labor completed in remote outdoor locations.
- Serve beyond traditional hours, possibly including weekends, nights, and holidays.
- Operate equipment and property of NCCC and/or sponsoring organization, with appropriate training and supervision without endangering oneself or others or causing any damage to property.
- Demonstrate professionalism with project sponsors, community members, teammates, Team Leaders and NCCC staff. Professionalism includes:
  - Following lawful orders, direction, and instruction from supervisory personnel.
  - Communicating through the existing chain of command.
  - Serving cooperatively and collaboratively.
  - Demonstrating patience, empathy and courtesy.

- Giving and receiving feedback constructively and communicating effectively.
- Maintaining appropriate personal appearance and hygiene.
- Being respectful in all forms of communication.
- Being on time.
- Giving a good-faith effort at all times.

### Fitness to Serve:

Members will be expected to:

- Demonstrate basic self-management skills, including, but not limited to, adequate sleep, nutrition, and hydration, as well as maintaining good fitness and hygiene.
- Independently manage and take all prescribed medications.
- If serving in the Traditional Corps, perform physical activities such as trail building, home construction, tree planting, and removal of invasive plant species.
- If serving in the NCCC FEMA Corps, pass a background security check from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).
- If serving in the NCCC Forest Corps, pass the 'arduous' level of USFS' Work Capacity Test.

### Team Related:

Members will be expected to:

- Share a living space with other members that may offer little to no privacy. This may include:
  - Residing in rustic living conditions such as camping or sleeping on the floor in close quarters.
  - Sometimes sharing one bathroom with the entire team for the length of the project.
  - Participating in the upkeep of the shared living space.
  - Having no or very limited access to technology (cell phones, computers, internet, etc.).
  - Residing in accommodations where restrictions such as a curfew may be in place based upon the requirements of the facility.
- Adjusting to limited nutritional options that may require Corps members and Team Leaders to supplement their dietary requirements.
- Express needs and preferences so teammates are aware of them, while at the same time putting the team's best interests ahead of their own.
- Develop respectful relationships with other people from diverse backgrounds, respect differing opinions, and contribute to a welcoming, inclusive environment for all.

- Engage in effective conflict resolution and problem solving with teammates, Team Leaders, NCCC staff, community members, and project sponsors.
- Manage their emotions (e.g. frustration) constructively and in a way that does not impede the ability of other members to pursue and accomplish the NCCC mission.

## Code of Conduct and Professional Behavior

### A. Standards of Conduct

Standards of conduct are necessary for both morale and safety. As members of AmeriCorps NCCC, members will be held responsible for the member's actions; therefore, the member's conduct should always be in the best interests of AmeriCorps NCCC. Upon arrival at campus, all standards of conduct will apply. All AmeriCorps NCCC members will:

- Model civic pride and responsibility in the member's daily conduct and behavior, and, at all times, conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on them and on AmeriCorps NCCC.
- Treat all persons with respect and courtesy and settle disputes in a non-violent, non-abusive manner, and show respect toward fellow Corps members, Team Leaders, and staff in AmeriCorps NCCC.
- Conduct themselves in such a manner so as to avoid intentional or reckless harm to other persons.
- Adhere to the rules and regulations of AmeriCorps NCCC, the host facility (if any), and all applicable city, state, and federal laws.
- Bear a fair share of the workload and exhibit, at a minimum, satisfactory performance.
- Be punctual for scheduled activities and service assignments.
- Use tools, government equipment, safety equipment safely and operate vehicles in a safe and proper manner.
- Refrain at all times from using profanity in professional settings.
- Wear the AmeriCorps NCCC uniform with pride and in accordance with the uniform standards.
- Maintain appropriate personal hygiene.

### B. Prohibitions

#### 1. Firearms & Other Weapons

Possession of any firearm, ammunition, or other weapons (e.g., knives with blades longer than three inches, brass knuckles, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

#### 2. Illegal & Prescription Drugs

Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, or the improper possession, use, or distribution of

prescription medication, is strictly prohibited. As a federal program, the legality of any drug is determined under federal law, not state law.

In circumstances when an individual state applies a more restrictive law to Cannabidiol (CBD) possession and use, including for federally legal industrial hemp-based CBD, NCCC follows the more restrictive state law. It is the responsibility of the AmeriCorps NCCC member to know the pertinent CBD laws in the state they are serving in should they elect to use CBD products.

#### 3. Alcohol—Underage Individuals

Possession or use of alcohol by individuals under 21 years of age is prohibited.

Knowingly serving or providing individuals under 21 years of age with alcohol is prohibited.

#### 4. Alcohol—Individuals 21 or Older

Possession or use of alcohol by individuals 21 years of age or older is prohibited during service and training hours, at projects sites, and on AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and at facilities, lodging, or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization. This does not preclude individuals who are of legal age from consuming alcohol during off duty hours and outside the confines of the AmeriCorps NCCC/sponsor organization provided facilities.

#### 5. Sexual Contact

Members will refrain from all forms of sexual contact while on duty and while on, or in close proximity to, AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and at facilities, lodging, or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization.

#### 6. Tobacco

Federal law prohibits retailers from selling any tobacco product to anyone under 21. The new federal minimum age of sale applies to all retail establishments and persons with no exceptions. Members are expected to comply with this law.

Except in designated areas, and with the Team Leader's approval, the use of all tobacco products and tobacco delivery methods, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, cigars, pipe tobacco, vaporizers, electronic nicotine delivery systems including e-cigarettes and e-liquids, are prohibited on AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and at facilities, lodging, or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization.



## C. Professional Behavior

Members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Each member's actions reflect on both AmeriCorps NCCC and AmeriCorps as a whole. Members represent the national service program in the local community. Consequently, members will at no time act in such a manner that would bring discredit upon AmeriCorps NCCC or that, in the opinion of the Region Director, would be prejudicial to the good order and discipline of AmeriCorps NCCC. Such conduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## D. Outside Activities

A member shall not engage in any outside activity (e.g., employment, hobby, or personal volunteer opportunity) that either precludes, limits, or detracts from the member serving successfully as an AmeriCorps NCCC Team Leader or Corps member. If it is determined by the Unit Leader, subject to approval of the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership, that such activity does either preclude, limit, or detract from a member meeting all of the member's official AmeriCorps NCCC service responsibilities, that outside activity must cease if the member desires to continue serving in the AmeriCorps NCCC.

## E. Professional Courtesy

Courtesy and respect for the opinions of others are integral parts of professionalism. Civilized discussion and constructive criticism are encouraged, but decorum and a constructive atmosphere are to be maintained at all times. Under no circumstances will members be insubordinate to leaders, including, but not limited to, Team Leaders, AmeriCorps NCCC staff, project sponsors, or other supervisors. Another part of professionalism is acceptance of decisions. Input into most decisions will be sought and encouraged. Once a decision has been made, however, all members are expected to comply with, implement, and support the decision.

## F. Prohibited Relationships & Practices

Relationships that are exploitive or that have the appearance of partiality, preferential treatment, or the improper use of position for personal gain are prejudicial to the morale of AmeriCorps NCCC members and will not be tolerated. Relationships between Corps members and Team Leaders/ AmeriCorps NCCC staff/project sponsors (including volunteer and contract supervisors) or between Team Leaders and Corps members/staff/projects sponsors (including volunteer and contract supervisors) are strictly forbidden.

Any nonprofessional relationship between Corps members/ Team Leaders/AmeriCorps NCCC staff/ project supervisors (including volunteer and contract supervisors) will inherently cause the perception of partiality or preferential treatment. It may also lead to perceptions of exploitation. Therefore, such relationships are strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. For example, nonprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to:

- intimate/sexual relationships
- borrowing or lending money, automobiles, or other personal property
- engaging in financial or business dealings, or acting as an agent or sponsor with any commercial enterprise
- soliciting contributions for gifts, services, or other gratuities that include the use of position to influence or coerce others into buying commodities, goods, or services
- allowing services to be performed (compensated or uncompensated) that have no reasonable connection with AmeriCorps NCCC activities
- gambling for goods, services, or money
- any activity and/or relationship that, in the judgment of the Region Director, may reasonably be perceived to undermine discipline, good order, or morale



## Disciplinary Standards

AmeriCorps NCCC's disciplinary standards assist in creating an environment where members not only are encouraged and empowered to complete the program successfully by performing national service but also are taught discipline, team building, and mission accomplishment. The disciplinary standards set forth the procedures used in disciplining, transferring, and dismissing members from AmeriCorps NCCC, as well as members' appellate rights. The official sanctions set forth below may be used by a Region Director in establishing a methodology for the imposition of appropriate punishment. However, unless specifically noted, there is no requirement to follow a prescribed sequence in the imposition of a particular consequence.

An Acting Region Director has all the powers and authority of the Region Director, up to and including the right to dismiss a member.

### A. Official Sanctions

#### 1. Verbal Warnings

AmeriCorps Team Leaders and AmeriCorps NCCC staff in the member's supervisory structure are authorized to administer formal verbal warnings to members. This is in addition to informal verbal warnings and other informal attempts to correct deficiencies, which may be documented in a Team Leader's journal and support a finding of a pattern of misconduct. A formal verbal warning is an official act in the disciplinary process. It will be documented through a formal incident report and reported to the member's Unit Leader. Infractions identified by other AmeriCorps NCCC staff members will be reported to the appropriate individual in the member's supervisory structure. The member will also be informed that if the member repeats the infraction, then further disciplinary action will be initiated.

#### 2. Written Warnings

AmeriCorps Team Leaders and AmeriCorps NCCC staff in the member's supervisory structure are authorized to administer written warnings to members. It will be documented through a formal incident report and reported to the member's Unit Leader for inclusion in the member's file. The member will acknowledge receipt of the written warning by signing the document. Rebuttals will be submitted to the member's Unit Leader. By signing the document, the member is only acknowledging receipt of the document, retaining the right to submit member's interpretation of the events. If a member refuses to sign the document, such refusal will be noted on the document. The incident report and the written warning will be placed in the member's file along with any rebuttal submitted by the member. The member has three duty days to submit any rebuttal in writing to member's Unit Leader.

#### 3. Extra Duties and Instructions

When a member has exhibited a deficiency in a specific area of conduct (e.g., not being on time for work, training, or meetings) or performance of duties (e.g., not cleaning the member's room and common areas), the Team Leader or an AmeriCorps NCCC staff person in the member's supervisory structure may impose extra duties and/or instructions in order to correct the deficiency (Please see chart on next page). The maximum number of hours for extra duties and/or instructions is 12 hours for any one deficiency. The member cannot perform any work that a paid contractor or paid staff does. These limits apply to each person per occurrence. The assignment of extra duties or instruction must be documented in writing by the imposing individual, to include the parameters, and put in the member file.

Some examples include research projects related to the infraction, reflection papers on violation and implications for self and the program, campus/residence hall activities that enhance the overall community living conditions on the campus. Extra duties and/or instructions will be assigned/ conducted after normal duty hours or on weekends and will not involve activities that are inherently dangerous, demeaning, or otherwise inappropriate. Extra duties and/or instructions will not count toward service hour credit.

#### 4. Letters of Reprimand

When a member has exhibited a deficiency in upholding policies and procedures or exhibited behavior that is of significant concern to the order and discipline of AmeriCorps NCCC, and after meeting either in person or by telephone with an AmeriCorps NCCC staff person in the member's supervisory structure, a Letter of Reprimand may be drafted. This is a written documentation of an incident and a synopsis of the discussion with the member. The member will acknowledge receipt by signing the document. By signing the document, the member is only acknowledging receipt, retaining the right to submit the member's own interpretation of the incident(s) and/or violation(s).

If a member refuses to sign the document, such refusal will be noted on the document. The member has three duty days to submit any rebuttal.

If not withdrawn, the Letter of Reprimand will be put in member's file along with any rebuttal submitted by the member. If the Letter of Reprimand is generated by a Unit Leader, a copy will be forwarded to the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership and the Region Director.

Summary Table of Disciplinary Actions			
TEAM LEADERS	UNIT LEADERS	DEPUTY REGION DIRECTOR FOR UNIT LEADERSHIP	REGION DIRECTOR
VERBAL WARNINGS			
WRITTEN WARNINGS			
ASSIGNMENT OF EXTRA DUTY, PER INCIDENT, UP TO			
4 HOURS	8 HOURS	12 HOURS	12 HOURS
	Letter of Reprimand	Letter of Reprimand	Letter of Reprimand
	Behavior Contract	Behavior Contract	Behavior Contract
		Suspension (up to 5 days per incident)	Suspension (up to 5 days per incident)
			Intercampus Transfer or Dismissal

### 5. Behavior Contracts

In order to set forth clear expectations for a member to correct deficiencies in conduct or performance of duties, a Behavior Contract may be drafted. This is generated by an AmeriCorps NCCC staff person in the member's supervisory structure. This document will include content of the incident(s) and/or violation(s) and clearly indicate the behavior which the member is expected to change, as well as the consequences if the Behavior Contract is violated. The member will acknowledge receipt and agree to the expected behavior requirements by signing the document. There will be no opportunity to submit a rebuttal to the decision to require a Behavior Contract, but the member will have input concerning the expectations set forth in the contract. If the member refuses to sign the contract, the member may be subject to further disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal from the program. The Behavior Contract will be placed in the member's file and a copy will be forwarded to the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership and Region Director.

Non-compliance with a behavior contract is not in and of itself a dismissible offence; however, non-compliance may be considered as a factor in further disciplinary proceedings.

### B. Suspension, Loss of Privileges, & Loss of Living Allowance

At the discretion of the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director, a member may be officially suspended from all program activities for up to five days per incident. During suspension, members will not receive a living allowance or earn service credit toward the education award. While suspended, members may attend AmeriCorps

NCCC meals; however, members could face additional administrative sanctions, including restriction to the dormitory or extra duties and/or instruction, which may be served during suspension. Members will not receive service credit for any duties and/or instruction performed during this period.

If the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director assigns suspension, the imposition of all or a portion of the suspension may be reduced for up to 60 days if the violation does not occur again. Should the member be involved in an additional infraction of any kind during the period of the waived suspension, the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director may immediately vacate the waiver requiring imposition of any un-served portion of the waived suspension and may impose additional punishment, as appropriate.





## C. Dismissals

The Region Director is the final authority for suspension and dismissal. The National Program Director is the appellate authority.

### 1. Non-Discretionary Dismissals

The following alleged infractions will lead to a dismissal hearing:

- a. Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, including failing an AmeriCorps NCCC drug test, or the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication. If a member claims that a failed drug test was due to a form of legal CBD, the failed drug screen will result in non-discretionary dismissal from the NCCC program, as it would for all other failed drug tests.
- b. Serving or providing alcohol to individuals under 21 years of age, with knowledge that the individual was underage.

If, after following the appropriate procedures (Disciplinary Standards, Section E), the Region Director finds that the member committed either (a) or (b) above, the Region Director must dismiss the member.

### 2. Discretionary Dismissal

A Region Director may hold a dismissal hearing for any alleged infraction of AmeriCorps NCCC policy or the Code of Conduct. Examples of infractions that are likely to result in a dismissal hearing include, but are not limited to:

- a. Incidents where the member is shown to be a current and direct threat to the member or others. The definition of direct threat is "representing a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others".
- b. Incidents in which a member is accused or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. Consequently, all AmeriCorps NCCC members will notify the respective Region Director or designee whenever they are arrested, charged, and/or convicted of a crime. The notification will occur as soon as one of the above actions occurs. Failure to provide timely notification may result in dismissal proceedings.
- c. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages by underage individuals. Possession or use of alcohol by of-age members on, or in close proximity to, AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and at facilities, lodging, or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization.
- d. Improper physical contact; possession or use of firearms or other weapons, such as knives, clubs, brass knuckles; theft; intentional destruction of property; threatening behavior toward others.

- e. Consistent with AmeriCorps NCCC federal legislation, incidents that would, in the opinion of the Region Director, tend to jeopardize the enforcement of the standards of conduct or diminish the opportunities of other members.
- f. Irresponsible and disrespectful behavior that reflects negatively on themselves and AmeriCorps NCCC or that, in the opinion of the Region Director, would be prejudicial to the good order and discipline of AmeriCorps.

## D. Criteria for Dismissal

### 1. Transfer for Cause

When, in the opinion of the Region Director, the retention of a member in that member's campus will jeopardize the enforcement of the standards of conduct set by the Region Director or diminish the opportunities for other member's in that campus, the Region Director may, with the approval of the National Director, transfer a member to another campus.

### 2. Dismissal for Cause

When, in the opinion of the Region Director, the retention of an individual in AmeriCorps NCCC will jeopardize the enforcement of the standards of conduct or diminish the opportunities of other members, and the Region Director further determines that transfer to another unit or campus is not appropriate, the Region Director may dismiss the individual from the program.

This is the most severe sanction that a Region Director may impose; therefore, dismissal should be used for the most serious infractions, for continuing patterns of misconduct, or when the Region Director determines that the member's overall performance is such that it significantly diminishes opportunities of other members.

### 3. Arrests & Convictions

Upon being charged with an offense, a member may, during the time that charges are pending, and at the discretion of the Region Director or Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership, have the member's service suspended without receiving a living allowance and without receiving credit for hours missed.

Alternatively, a Region Director may institute dismissal proceedings for misconduct that may be subject to future criminal proceedings. In other words, if a Region Director has sufficient facts upon which to base a decision, the Region Director may hold a dismissal hearing before any criminal action is taken, because a dismissal hearing is administrative, and not criminal in nature.

An individual who has been charged with an offense and is later acquitted or has had the charge(s) dismissed, may be allowed to resume service, at the discretion of the Region Director.

Further, if reinstated, the individual may be entitled, at the discretion of the Region Director, to any or part of the living allowance and service hours missed as a result of the suspension. If an individual is convicted of an offense while serving, the individual will be given a dismissal hearing. A conviction is considered to be final even though it may be in the appellate process.

## **E. Dismissal Procedures**

### **1. During the Probationary Period**

Members will be in probationary status from the day they arrive on campus through 35 calendar days after teams deploy to their first project. During this probationary period, individuals who are being considered for involuntary dismissal will receive written notice of the Region Director's intent, and be given a reasonable opportunity to respond (either orally or in writing). No hearing is required under these circumstances. If the Region Director decides to dismiss the member, the member has 10 days to appeal the decision to the National Director, in writing. Upon dismissal, the individual will be sent home.

### **2. Following the Probationary Period**

After completion of the probationary period, individuals who are facing either transfer or dismissal from the program are entitled to a hearing before a decision to dismiss is made by the Region Director. The hearing may be conducted in person, virtually, or telephonically. An individual may waive the hearing, but must do so in writing.

These individuals shall be provided written notice of the Region Director's intent and the date and time for a hearing. This notice shall state the reasons for the proposed action and shall provide the individual sufficient opportunity (of at least 24 hours) to prepare to present the member's case to the Region Director at a hearing, which includes reviewing the evidence that will be presented at the hearing (statements, documents, exhibits, etc.). Continuances requested by the individual will be granted for good cause. This notice requirement may be waived by the individual, in writing.

During a hearing, the individual has the right to submit documents and call witnesses for the presentation of relevant testimony and the right to not make any statements. Additionally, the individual shall be afforded the opportunity to examine and cross-examine any witness. A member may also request a spokesperson to be present on behalf of the member. This may include an attorney who is hired by the member, at no expense to the

government. This spokesperson will have the right to question the witnesses, and to speak on behalf of the member. If the spokesperson is an AmeriCorps NCCC member, the spokesperson shall be given ample opportunity to assist the individual in preparing for the hearing. The Region Director shall have the discretion to deny the individual's witness request(s) or specific questions desired by the member, if, in the opinion of the Region Director, the live testimony of that witness request(s), or specific questions desired by the member, is not relevant to the issue(s) under consideration, and will not make a substantial contribution to the resolution of the case. The Region Director may also limit the number of witnesses to a reasonable number when the testimony of the witnesses will be, in the opinion of the Region Director, cumulative in nature. A typed, summarized transcript will be taken of the proceedings, which will be made available to the appellate authority upon request.

### **3. Suspensions Pending Dismissal Hearing**

Depending on the nature of the misconduct, the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director may, at the Region Director's discretion, either allow the individual to continue service or to suspend the individual (with no living allowance or service credit) during the time the disciplinary proceedings are ongoing. If a member is considered to be a current and direct threat either to the member themselves or to others, the Region Director may remove the member from the region or project location until a hearing can be held. If a suspended member is ultimately reinstated, the member may, at the Region Director's discretion, receive all or part of the allowances and service credit forfeited during the period of suspension.

## **F. Changes within Regions**

The transfer of members to other teams and units within the region is considered to be an internal region staff decision. Consequently, a member has no right to appeal this decision to the AmeriCorps NCCC National Director. Region Directors or designees shall have discretion in establishing appropriate procedures to assist them in the day-to-day internal operation of the region, including criteria for intra-region transfers. AmeriCorps NCCC does not permit transfers into or out of the AmeriCorps NCCC program.



## G. Team Leaders

AmeriCorps NCCC may terminate Team Leader's enrollment, consistent with the provisions of the AmeriCorps NCCC Member Handbook. A Team Leader who is involuntarily terminated from the program or who leaves voluntarily without having compelling reasons for departing early as outlined in the Member Handbook is not eligible for any part of the education award. At the discretion of the Region Director, the Team Leader may also be demoted to Corps Member if the individual is 26 years of age or younger and wishes to remain in the program. The Team Leader acknowledges that when continuing in the AmeriCorps NCCC as a Corps Member, the living allowance will be adjusted as of the effective date of the demotion consistent with the living allowance granted to other Corps Members during the same service. If, at the time of successful completion of the program, the Team Leader is serving in Corps Member status, the individual will not receive a relocation allowance.

## H. Appellate Procedures

### 1. Appeal to the National Director

An AmeriCorps NCCC member who desires to appeal a Region Director's decision to either transfer the member to another region or dismiss that member from AmeriCorps NCCC shall have the right to appeal the decision to the National Director. However, as stated above, a decision to transfer an individual within the region to another unit is not reviewable. The Region Director's final decision following a dismissal hearing shall be issued in writing. In this decision, the Region Director will inform the individual of the member's right to appeal the decision, and that an individual's appeal must be submitted to the National Director in writing within 10 days of the Region Director's final decision. The written appeal should contain the member's statement as to why the appeal should be granted, as well as any statements on behalf of the individual, either on the merits of the case, or in extenuation and/or mitigation. Additionally, attorney fees are not authorized for any aspects of the hearing process or the appeal. The appeal shall normally be acted upon within 15 days from receipt by the appellate authority.

### 2. Standard of Review

The appeal does not constitute a *de novo* (new) hearing, but the standard will be whether or not the Region Director abused the Region Director's discretion in determining that a member should either be transferred or dismissed. The only exception is for those appeals where new evidence having a direct bearing on the facts of the case is discovered after the appeal has been submitted.

### 3. Status of Members During Appeal

Following appropriate due process procedures (see Disciplinary Standards, Section E, Dismissal Procedures) resulting in a decision to dismiss, individuals will be sent home. If the appeal is ultimately successful and the member is reinstated, the living allowance may, depending on the totality of the circumstances, be restored. However, by statute, service hours may not be restored.

### 4. Authority to Mitigate Punishment

The National Director may decide to either reduce the punishment, or to transfer an individual who has been dismissed from the program by a Region Director, but may not increase the level of punishment by dismissing an individual who has appealed a transfer determination by a Region Director.

## I. Limited Immunity

Exceptions to the preceding disciplinary guidelines may apply in cases where a report is made of sexual assault which occurred in connection with violations of NCCC policies. See Sexual Assault, Section H, Limited Immunity.



## Sexual Harassment/Assault

AmeriCorps NCCC is committed to preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault and providing a compassionate and supportive response to all members that have been harassed or assaulted. To that end, AmeriCorps NCCC makes the following commitment to our members:

- Members will receive appropriate training, guidance, and instruction on the prevention of sexual harassment & prevention of sexual assault.
- Members can reach out to any staff, at any time, to make a report of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Reports will always be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- AmeriCorps NCCC will provide resources for members for confidential sexual harassment/assault support.

## Sexual Harassment

### A. Definition

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Sexual harassment does not always have to be specifically about sexual behavior or directed at a specific person. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it's so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision.

### B. Conditions of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be carried out by:

- Someone with the same, or different, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- A supervisor, peer, teammate, Team Leader, or any NCCC staff.
- A sponsor staff, site supervisor, or community member who is not employed by NCCC.

A person who is not the intended target of harassing behavior may be affected negatively by observing or witnessing such behavior.

### C. Forms of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to, the following conduct:

- Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors in return for job or service benefits.
- Attempts to control, influence, or affect the life of an individual through behavior of a sexual nature.
- Pressure for sexual favors.

- Pressure to go out on dates.
- Favorable treatment of those who grant sexual favors and/or go out on dates.
- Unwelcome letters, telephone calls, text messages, social media messages or posts.
- Distribution or display of materials of a sexual nature.
- Discussion of sexually explicit materials or experiences.
- Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, questions, suggestive looks, or gestures.
- Unwelcome touching, deliberate touching, leaning over, hovering, or pinching.
- Any threat or act of violence committed by a person who is or has been involved in a sexual/romantic relationship with the victim.
- Acts attempted or committed by a person for sexual gratification, financial gain, or advancement through the abuse/exploitation of another person's sexuality.
- A pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

### D. Prohibited Behaviors

Some actions are always considered sexual harassment, even if some or all the people involved are comfortable with the behavior. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- **Quid Pro Quo:** Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors in return for job or service benefits. Favorable treatment of those who grant sexual favors and/or go out on dates.
- **Sexual or romantic relationships with uneven power dynamics:** Relationship between CM and TL, any member and NCCC Staff, or any member and Project staff/volunteers
- **Hostile Environment:** Unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. In cases of hostile work environments, the victim does not have to be the person harassed. It can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

Once an individual has indicated (verbally or in writing) that specific conduct is offensive, any continued offensive conduct is sexual harassment.



# Sexual Assault

## A. Definition

Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted sexual contact or behavior that takes place without the consent of the victim. Consent must be informed, coherent, freely given, and ongoing. Consent must be given/received every time for every type of activity, before engaging in the activity. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, for any reason. Anyone who is asleep, unconscious, incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, underage, or in an uneven power relationship can't consent.

## B. Conditions of Sexual Assault

Sexual assault can be carried out by:

- A person of the same, or different, gender identity or sexual orientation as the survivor.
- A supervisor, peer, NCCC employee, or member of the sponsoring organization.
- A stranger or member of the local community.
- A person who is currently or was previously in a romantic/sexual relationship with the survivor.

## C. Forms of Sexual Assault

Forms of sexual assault include, but are not limited to:

- fondling or unwanted sexual touching
- forcing someone to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body
- penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape
- attempted rape

## D. Reporting

A survivor has the option of reporting an incident of sexual assault to any staff member and/or law enforcement.

In some cases, survivors may not want to, or are not ready to, report a sexual assault incident to staff. In those cases, the victim can choose confidential reporting. Critical and supportive resources are provided with no information released to staff or law enforcement.

### 1. Confidential Reporting

AmeriCorps NCCC members may reach out for confidential support, at any time and for any reason, by calling or texting the AmeriCorps NCCC Sexual Assault Hotline at 866-869-1176 or by going to <https://hotline.rainn.org/ameriCorps>.

The AmeriCorps NCCC Sexual Assault Hotline is administered by RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network). Members will be speaking to a representative from their network when they call.

AmeriCorps NCCC staff and law enforcement are not notified of hotline contacts or access unless disclosure is required by law. Such disclosure is

extremely rare and generally occurs only when there is an imminent safety concern.

AmeriCorps NCCC receives monthly utilization reports, meaning the number of calls received by the hotline. Names are not included in the utilization reports.

### 2. Nonconfidential Reporting to Law Enforcement

A police report will need to be filed in the state in which the assault took place. Consider the following:

- statutes of limitation for reporting sexual assault to the police
- legal definitions of sexual assault
- laws regarding consent
- criminal penalties for people convicted of sexual assault

The ability to file criminal charges may be impacted if the member leaves the state in which the incident occurred. NCCC cooperates with law enforcement investigations.

### 3. Nonconfidential Reporting to NCCC

Staff respects privacy and will only discuss the case with another staff member if that person has an official need to know.

#### a. Making a report to a Team Leader

When sexual harassment or sexual assault is reported to a Team Leader, the Team Leader is required to inform the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader takes action to investigate the situation and ensure safety for all.

#### b. Making a report to a Staff Member

- Members can reach out to any staff, at any time, to make a report of sexual harassment or sexual assault.
- An administrative investigation will be led by NCCC staff.
- Administrative investigations include interviews of all parties involved and those who hold knowledge of the situation.
- The privacy of all will be respected during the administrative investigation.
- Staff will take steps to ensure the safety of all during the administrative investigation.

## E. During an Administrative Investigation

During an administrative investigation, staff will continue to support all those affected by the incident.

Administrative investigations take time because it's important that all of the facts and supporting evidence are properly collected and examined. Staff will take the time to collect all available evidence before making a decision.

- Actions will be taken to provide for the Member's ongoing safety.
- Member(s) will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Staff will be available to member(s) for support.
- Staff will work closely with members to make decisions regarding their continued service.

## F. Conclusion of an Administrative Investigation

At the conclusion of an administrative investigation, the Unit Leader will recommend next steps, disciplinary action, or otherwise to the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership.

The Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership will make a recommendation to the Region Director for final decision making.

## G. Outcome of an Administrative investigation

- Allegations, investigations into those allegations, and the outcomes of those situations are kept strictly confidential, unless mandated by law.
- Corps Members, Team Leaders, and staff are expected to maintain privacy.
- Information is not disclosed or discussed other than in an official capacity in direct relation to the investigation.
- Disciplinary action resulting from an administrative investigation is only shared with the individual receiving the disciplinary action.
- Other parties are notified when action takes place, but not given specifics about the action.

## H. Limited Immunity

If a Member proactively comes forward to NCCC staff to report a sexual assault, staff will not take disciplinary action if that Member was violating policy in connection with the incident. Members who participate in or encourage a sexual assault are not covered by the Limited Immunity Policy.

## I. Additional Resources

- **AmeriCorps NCCC Sexual Assault Hotline**  
<https://hotline.rainn.org/americorps> or 866-869-1176.
- **National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)**  
[www.NSVRC.org](http://www.NSVRC.org); provides search tool for anti-sexual assault organizations located across the U.S. and educational materials for victims and advocates.
- **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) (Direct)**  
[www.RAINN.org](http://www.RAINN.org) or 1-800-656-4673; provides educational resources and support opportunities.
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or 1-800-273-8255; one-on-one, confidential, crisis support 24/7 with trained staff members.
- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**  
If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org).
- **Relevant Medical Services Covered by NCCC Limited Health Benefit Plan**
  - Immediate, in-the-moment counseling through the Member Assistance Program
  - Unlimited counseling sessions via Teledoc (not ideal for emergent/urgent situations)
  - Emergency and Inpatient Hospitalization services
  - STI Testing
  - Pre-natal care, subject to conditions. See page 6 of NCCC Health Benefit Guide for details.
- **Relevant Medical Services NOT Covered by NCCC Limited Health Benefit Plan**
  - Abortion services

The resources listed above, and more, can be found on the [NCCC Member Wellness Resources | AmeriCorps](#) site:



## Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco

Substance misuse and abuse adversely affects health and job performance, creates dangerous situations, and serves to undermine the community's confidence in AmeriCorps NCCC. Therefore, AmeriCorps NCCC prohibits the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs; the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication; the abuse of over the counter medication; and alcohol abuse on the part of its members.

Tobacco has also been shown to adversely affect a user's health and, in some cases, the health of those who are exposed to secondhand smoke. Therefore, AmeriCorps NCCC will minimize exposure to such products for individuals who do not choose to use them.

Members who are dealing with addiction issues, such as drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc., may request assistance from AmeriCorps NCCC staff with locating services and transportation to nearby treatment programs. Prior to utilizing this assistance, members must disclose addiction issues to a UL, and/or DRDUL. Provided services will be documented in writing by the campus (UL, and/or DRDUL), along with outlined documentation of member's expectations during service term and while utilizing treatment options.

### A. Definition

Members who are dealing with addiction issues, such as drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc., may request assistance from NCCC region staff to identify support services and assistance with transportation to nearby support services.

Members must disclose their addiction issue to a NCCC staff member before receiving such assistance. Utilization of support services will be documented in writing by the staff member along with a summary of the member's expectations while utilizing support services and for the remainder of the service term.

**Substances** - medications, drugs of abuse, or toxins.

**Alcohol** - products containing ethyl alcohol or ethanol, such as beer, wine, or spirits.

**Drugs** - any substance taken into the body, other than alcohol, which may impair one's mental faculties and/ or physical performance.

**Tobacco** - any tobacco products and tobacco delivery methods, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, cigars, pipe tobacco, vaporizers, electronic nicotine delivery systems including e-cigarettes and e-liquids.

**Misuse** - use of any substance where the use is continued and pathological, not in conformance with prescription requirements, or occurring in circumstances where use is not permitted.

**Abuse** - The use of a substance, particularly drugs or alcohol, that leads to problems or distress in work, relationships, social responsibilities or health.

### B. Policy

#### 1. Legal Drinking Age

The legal drinking age is 21 years of age. Consequently, possession or use of alcohol by individuals who are under the legal drinking age is prohibited at all times and may result in dismissal. If under the age of 21, and assigned to a project in a territory of the U.S. that permits an individual to consume alcohol, members of AmeriCorps NCCC may still not possess or consume alcohol.

If it is determined by the Region Director that an individual who is 21 years or older serves or provides alcohol to individuals who are under the legal drinking age, with knowledge that the individuals are under the legal drinking age, the individual will be dismissed, subject to the appropriate due process procedures (see Disciplinary Standards, Section E, Dismissal Procedures).

#### 2. Possession & Consumption of Alcohol

Members are responsible for any individual actions related to the possession and consumption of alcohol, to include the effects of the use of alcohol. Performance, attendance, or behavior problems resulting from the use or abuse of alcohol are actionable disciplinary matters, up to and dismissal.

Alcohol is prohibited during service or training hours and it shall not be used by or served to anyone, regardless of age, on AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and at facilities, lodging, anywhere within the spike boundary established by the Team Leader and Unit Leader. or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization. All members are responsible for road safety on travel days and no member may consume alcohol 24 hours before the day of deployment and during the day(s) of spike travel.

No member may consume alcohol while wearing any AmeriCorps NCCC uniform item.

Additionally, AmeriCorps NCCC members are prohibited from possessing containers or packaging that originally was designed to hold alcoholic beverages while in AmeriCorps NCCC facilities, vehicles, spike facilities, or project locations.

### **a. AmeriCorps NCCC, Project, and Independent Service Projects (ISPs) Sponsored Events**

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited for all members during any AmeriCorps NCCC-sponsored event. Team dinners and recreational activities during which the entire team, including the Team Leader, is required to be present are considered AmeriCorps NCCC-sponsored events.

Members may be present at a project sponsor or ISP event where alcohol is present, but may not possess, serve, or consume alcohol.

### **b. Member Consumption of Alcohol at Unofficial Functions**

Alcohol is permitted by those who are of legal drinking age when in mixed groups consisting of underage and of age Team Leaders and Corps members. However, Team Leaders and members are strongly cautioned against these activities for the following reasons:

- Doing so may undermine team cohesion and contribute to the perception of fraternization
- Doing so exposes the Team Leader to situations that may undermine the Team Leader's leadership
- Doing so may lead to negative team performance due to a culture that focuses excessively on drinking
- Alcohol is often a contributing factor to misconduct that could result in dismissal

Some examples of mixed group consumption of alcohol for Team Leaders and Corps members who are over 21 are going to a bowling alley, attending a sporting event or concert, or sharing a non-AmeriCorps NCCC-funded meal. Team Leaders may not consume alcohol with Corps members when the sole purpose of the event is to go out drinking together.

### **c. Intoxication**

Consumption of alcohol must be in moderation and not to the point of intoxication, as members may be required to respond to a team issue at any time.

### **3. Alcohol Consumption & Operating Vehicles**

Members may not drive an AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor organization vehicle within 24 hours of consuming alcohol. Violations will result in loss of driving privileges for the remainder of the term and could result in additional disciplinary actions.

### **a. Government Vehicles & Alcohol**

Government vehicles will not be used to visit, pick up, and/or drop off members at establishments whose primary purpose is to serve alcohol, such as drinking establishments (bars, clubs, etc.) or liquor stores. Government vehicles will not be used to drop off or pick up person(s) at any places listed above. Additionally, government vehicles will not be used to transport any form of alcohol.

### **b. Teams Located in Rural Locations**

In the event that a team is located in a community in which the only option to go out to eat is an establishment with the primary purpose to serve alcohol, a team may drive to this location to eat, subject to Unit Leader Approval.

### **4. Legal Medication & Operating Vehicles**

Members may not operate AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor organization vehicles when taking medications that may cause drowsiness or adversely impact a person's ability to drive vehicles or heavy equipment.

### **5. Illegal Drugs & Controlled Substances**

Marijuana remains illegal under federal law and is considered an illegal drug in the NCCC program. In circumstances when an individual state applies a more restrictive law to Cannabidiol (CBD) possession and use, including for federally legal industrial hemp-based CBD, NCCC follows the more restrictive state law.

If it is determined by the Region Director that an individual has possessed, used, or distributed illegal drugs or paraphernalia, including failing an AmeriCorps NCCC drug test, or improperly possessed, used, or distributed prescription medication, that individual will be dismissed, subject to the appropriate due process procedures.





Generally within 14 days of being activated to an in-service status, all AmeriCorps NCCC members must pass an initial drug screening test in order to continue in the program. AmeriCorps NCCC staff conduct random drug screening among members throughout the service year and use the results to determine suitability for continued service. Members may also be required to submit to drug testing when there is reasonable suspicion of drug use. Members who test positive for illegal drugs will be given the opportunity to explain the positive results, subject to the appropriate due process procedures.

Additionally, AmeriCorps NCCC will take no disciplinary action against members who voluntarily admit to drug usage to the Region Director, Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership, or Unit Leader as long as all of the following conditions are met:

- The member voluntarily identifies as a user of illegal drugs prior to being identified (either officially or unofficially) for testing; and
- If required by AmeriCorps NCCC staff, the member agrees to participate in counseling or rehabilitation; and the member agrees to refrain from using illegal drugs thereafter (the member may be tested as often as necessary, at the discretion of the Region Director, in order to ensure compliance).

The above procedure will not apply to members who attempt to self-refer before they undergo initial drug testing. Therefore, the AmeriCorps NCCC self-referral policy will only apply to members who have successfully passed the initial drug screening and physical examination.

## **6. Problems Resulting from Substance Use**

Performance, attendance, or behavioral problems resulting from drug and/or alcohol abuse may lead to dismissal procedures.

## **7. Reporting in a Fit Condition**

Members may not operate AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor organization vehicles when taking medications that may cause drowsiness or adversely impact a person's ability to drive vehicles or heavy equipment.

Members will report to work in a fit condition to perform work duties. Reporting to work unfit for duty, under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other mind-altering substances not used in conformance with prescription requirements is unacceptable and is grounds for dismissal proceedings.

When appropriate, individuals suspected of being unfit for duty will be referred for medical evaluation upon the Region Director's approval.

## **8. Prescription Medication**

Members may not operate AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor organization vehicles when taking medications that may cause drowsiness or adversely impact a person's ability to drive vehicles or heavy equipment.

Individuals taking physician-prescribed medications must notify the Team Leader or Unit Leader if there is a likelihood that such medication could affect job performance and/or safety.

## **9. Arrest or Conviction**

Members arrested or convicted for illegal drug or alcohol involvement during the term of service may be considered to be in violation of AmeriCorps NCCC's substance abuse policy and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal.

## **10. Law Enforcement**

When appropriate, AmeriCorps NCCC will bring matters of illegal drug or alcohol use to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **11. Alcohol Abuse**

At the discretion of the Region Director, members who are of legal drinking age and are suspected of alcohol abuse may be requested to enroll in and successfully complete an alcohol education/treatment program as a condition of continuation in the AmeriCorps NCCC program.

## **12. Smoking Tobacco**

NCCC staff will designate specific areas on the campus facility as smoking/tobacco use areas. These areas will have proper receptacles and ventilation. All classrooms, cafeterias, AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, dormitories, and worksites will be smoke- and tobacco-free. This policy will be strictly enforced. Tobacco products and delivery methods, as defined earlier, are allowed only in designated areas. Sponsors and Team Leaders may determine worksite smoking/tobacco use areas. Except in designated areas and with supervisor approval, smoking/tobacco use is not permitted in facilities, lodging, or vehicles provided by a sponsor organization.

Federal law prohibits retailers from selling any tobacco product to anyone under 21.

# **Uniform & Grooming Standards**

## **A. General**

The AmeriCorps NCCC uniform enhances public recognition and perception of AmeriCorps NCCC. The uniform must be worn whenever representing AmeriCorps NCCC in an official capacity. Members must wear the uniform whenever they are visiting AmeriCorps NCCC Headquarters or a Sponsor Main Office. Uniforms may not be worn in establishments whose primary purpose is to serve alcohol.

## B. Guidelines During Service & Training Periods

The normal duty day uniform is the issued (1) T-shirt, polo shirt, or sweatshirt; (2) issued pants or shorts; and (3) black belt.

### 1. Positive Image

AmeriCorps NCCC members must maintain a positive and professional image in dress, appearance, and demeanor.

### 2. Uniform

Uniform items will be clean and in good repair at all times and will be worn when representing AmeriCorps NCCC, including during training or while performing Independent Service Projects (ISP).

For travel to a project site where the team is en route, members are required to wear an AmeriCorps NCCC issued shirt or sweatshirt in a manner that identifies them as an AmeriCorps NCCC member. On the day of arrival to the project or housing site, members must wear the full uniform.

The uniform may not be altered in anyway such as ripping, intentional paint, or cuffing. Collars on the polo shirts may not be "popped" and must be worn in the flat position. Members must tuck the uniform shirts in when interacting with the public and/or in the presence of non-NCCC members, and may not wear tank tops or tube tops or go shirtless while in uniform while on duty. Pants and shorts must be worn so the pants or shorts cover all undergarments.

Steel-toed boots are standard footwear for safety reasons. When boots are not needed, footwear must be closed toe/heel.

Team Leaders and Unit Leaders have the authority to require specific uniform items to be worn for unique circumstances for special occasions and ceremonial events.

Additionally, Forest Corps members are required to maintain readiness for wildland fire response at all times, including being equipped with NCCC-provided full fire gear, which must be kept in good condition.

### 3. Non-Issued Uniform Items

Members may wear personal rain gear outdoors during periods of inclement weather if rain gear is not available, or not suitable for the work members are performing.

Members may not wear a uniform issued by a sponsor without prior review or approval. Members may wear sponsor-issued safety equipment.

### 4. Jewelry

Due to safety concerns, piercings worn outside the member uniform, or while on duty, are to be no larger than a dime; multiple piercings complying with the

policy are permitted. All tunnels in the ears must be solid. Necklaces and bracelets are permissible, but may need to be removed or tucked inside the uniform for safety purposes. Additionally, members will, when appropriate, adhere to more restrictive standards set by the Team Leader, Unit Leader, or (when approved by regional leadership) a project sponsor for safety or professional appearance reasons.

### 5. Hair

Hair, mustaches, and beards must be clean and neatly styled. Long hair can be a safety hazard; therefore, long hair must be pinned up or tied back when working near any power equipment or machinery.

### 6. Grooming Standards

All AmeriCorps NCCC members must comply with grooming standards, including laundry, proper showering and hygiene.

### 7. Federal Sponsors & Other Partners

If you are assigned to a federal agency, including FEMA or the U.S. Forest Service, please anticipate more restrictive standards for hair color and jewelry and be ready to make the changes required for successful service with a Federal agency.

Non-Federal Sponsors may also request more restrictive standards, to be approved on a case-by-case basis by regional leadership.

## C. Guidelines during Leisure Hours

During leisure hours, members may wear the clothing of choice that is appropriate, non-offensive, and in compliance with the standards of the host facility.

Members may wear full uniforms to supermarkets and other types of shopping venues. Additionally, uniform items may be worn during leisure hours in official AmeriCorps NCCC housing. Members may wear AmeriCorps NCCC cold weather gear during leisure hours. However, in no other leisure hours circumstances will the NCCC uniform be worn including while consuming alcohol or gambling or at bars, casinos, or other similar establishments whose primary purpose is to serve alcohol.

## Social Media Policy

Members must use common sense when using social media. Members should not post anything that they would not want employer, parents, or the general public to see.

While serving in AmeriCorps NCCC, the Code of Conduct and Professional Behavior, applies to all activities and behavior, both online, and offline.

AmeriCorps NCCC respects members' rights concerning free speech, but may take disciplinary action if a member's online comments violate any AmeriCorps NCCC policy, or indicate a violation of AmeriCorps NCCC policy, or are disrespectful, insubordinate, or disparaging (speaking inappropriately or negatively to, or about, specific AmeriCorps NCCC staff members, Team Leaders, or fellow Corps members, by name).

Only AmeriCorps HQ officials may authorize the creation of an official AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps NCCC social media account. Members may not create nor operate an official AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps NCCC social media account or any account that has the appearance of being an official AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps NCCC account.

## A. Use of National Service Insignia

AmeriCorps national service insignia, to include the AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps NCCC logos, belong to, and are controlled by AmeriCorps, a federal agency. It may be used only when properly authorized by designated AmeriCorps officials.

The AmeriCorps national service insignia may be used on informational materials describing AmeriCorps and other AmeriCorps-supported programs and in connection with approved programmatic activities. However, any use must be properly authorized by designated AmeriCorps officials.

The AmeriCorps national service insignia may not be used in any of the following ways:

- attempting to influence legislation
- organizing or engaging in protest, 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, engaging in religious proselytization
- supporting for-profit, commercial activities, a labor union, or a partisan political organization

## Telecommunication Policy

### A. Team Leader & Support Team Leader Laptops

The Support Team Leader and Team Leader laptop computers are intended to serve several purposes, including, but not limited to, use by member for:

- facilitating e-communication with NCCC staff and/or sponsor
- moving towards paperless reporting (weekly progress report and other Team Leader and campus paperwork)
- mobile information resource for team (through use of internet)
- facilitate, as needed, Life After AmeriCorps activities of members
- other uses, as deemed necessary, by appropriate staff

### B. Prohibitions

On or through any systems provided by AmeriCorps or a sponsor, members are prohibited from:

- interfering with or disabling programs intended to protect government systems such as antivirus, monitoring, filtering, anti-adware, or anti-spyware programs
- storing any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on the laptop
- visiting inappropriate sites, including but not limited to:
  - pornography
  - hate group sites
  - gambling
  - any other site inappropriate in a professional setting
- using the laptop to engage in any unprofessional behavior

Any member using telecommunications equipment issued by FEMA or USFS must comply with all AmeriCorps NCCC policies and procedures; the member must also adhere to more restrictive standards set by FEMA or USFS.



# BENEFITS

## Compensation Package

NCCC members receive a compensation package that is made up of a variety of direct and indirect benefits. The compensation package covers costs related to transportation, lodging, clothing, food, living expenses, and health care for the duration of the member's term. The value of these benefits varies by program and position. Corps members receive benefits that are the equivalent of \$12.60-\$15/service hour and Team Leaders receive benefits that are the equivalent of \$18-20/service hour.

## Living Allowance

During the term of service, members will receive a living allowance. The living allowance begins on the day the member is activated into service and terminates when the member leaves the program. The amount of this allowance is determined by AmeriCorps.

The living allowance is paid to participants biweekly. Payments cover a 14-day period and are paid ten days after the end of the pay period for which the allowance is earned. Funds will be deposited to the individual's bank account. The member is responsible for entering and keeping personal bank account information updated in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members can view or print earnings statements in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members' allowance will continue while on program breaks unless otherwise stated. Members should report payroll errors to the Member Support Specialist.

A taxable health care allowance is paid as part of the above-mentioned living allowance to offset the costs of personal health products and/or medical co-pays, in the amount set by the program.

All overpayments or unauthorized payments of living allowance will be repaid to NCCC. NCCC may offset amounts due against future living allowance payments without additional notice to the member.

### A. Direct Deposit Program

All members must participate in the direct deposit program. Individuals who already have bank or credit union accounts may elect to have the living allowance deposited directly to that account or they may open new accounts at a local financial institution. Individuals who do not have accounts must open an account at a local financial institution within 14 days of the status changing to "in-service" in the member portal. Members must enter direct deposit information into the portal.

## B. Federal & State Taxes

Federal and Social Security taxes will be withheld from the living allowance. There are no deductions for state tax. The member is personally responsible for filing and paying state taxes.

## C. Unemployment Compensation

The loss of a living allowance upon departure or completion of the AmeriCorps NCCC program does not constitute a basis for claiming unemployment compensation.

## Health Benefits & The Federal Employees Compensation Act

### A. Health Benefits

Members are covered by the AmeriCorps NCCC Health Benefits Plan which provides 24 hour health care coverage effective upon entry into the program; this benefit plan will automatically terminate at midnight on the date you exit the program.

The AmeriCorps Health Benefit Plan is a limited benefit plan that covers medical office visits, most lab and x-ray services, limited preventive care (e.g., an annual ob-gyn visit for women), emergency dental and vision, medical emergencies, surgical and hospitalization expenses, maternity care and most prescription drug costs. Specific benefit coverage and exclusion information as well as the procedures for obtaining care while you are serving are explained in detail in a member health benefit guide which is shared during in-processing and can be also be accessed through the My Resources tab in the portal.

### B. Federal Employee Compensation

Under Section 12620(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, members and Team Leaders are considered employees of the Federal Government for purposes of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), which is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) of the U.S. Department of Labor. This office is solely responsible for the adjudication of FECA claims.

## 1. Benefits

FECA provides workers' compensation benefits for illness or injury if it is determined by OWCP to be service related - i.e., caused or aggravated by the performance of an assignment. However, participants may not be covered by FECA, if the injury or disability results from the member's own misconduct, intoxication, or willful intent to bring about injury or death to themselves or others. Benefits approved under FECA begin after termination from AmeriCorps NCCC service and include payment for continuing medical care and permanent impairment of certain member or functions of the body in the event of a service-related disability. FECA also contains provisions or payment of certain death benefits such as shipment of body, funeral, and burial costs, and survivor benefits if the participant's death results from an injury or illness sustained in the performance of official duties.

## 2. Claims Procedures

If a participant is injured or experiences an emergency illness related to a service assignment, the Unit Leader, the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership, and the Region Director must be notified immediately. Additionally, members should prepare documentation of the injury and the circumstances leading to the injury immediately after the accident. Members can also file a compensation claim after they have left the program. Members have three years from the date of injury or three years from the date they realized the illness to file a Worker Compensation form.

## 3. Initiating a Claim: Member or Former Member's Role

To initiate a Workers' Compensation Claim, the member or former member must first create an Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP) account at [www.ecomp.dol.gov](http://www.ecomp.dol.gov) and then file Form CA-1 for a traumatic injury, including medical documentation in PDF format. Photos of medical documentation are not acceptable. Failure to provide the necessary documentation within 30 days of claim submission will result in denial. The member may reach out to the Member Support Specialist if they have questions about how to fill out certain sections of the CA-1.

The member or former member communicates directly with the Department of Labor (DOL) after the claim is submitted. NCCC staff is fully removed from the communication loop, except in rare cases when the DOL contacts the CPO Project Manager for more information about the injury after the claim is submitted.

## 4. Advancing a Claim: NCCC Staff Role

The ECOMP system will automatically route the supervisor portion of the CA-1 form to the supervisor's (Unit Leader) email that is entered into the claim by the member. Upon receiving DOL's CA-1 email, the supervisor fills out and submits their portion.

The ECOMP system will automatically route all claims to the designated agency reviewer for approval once the supervisor portion is completed.

## 5. Appeals Procedures

A participant may appeal any claim rejected by OWCP by submitting a request for review within 90 days from the date of the final decision by OWCP. In filing an appeal, it is the participant's responsibility to contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., and to comply with all established procedures. AmeriCorps NCCC cannot participate in any appeals but may assist the participant in providing information to the Department of Labor.

## Education Award

To use an education award, each AmeriCorps NCCC member must comply with the National Service Trust. The education award is taxable in the year it is used.

**The most current information about the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is available at [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov) or by calling the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677.**

### A. General

In general, to qualify for an education award, a member must successfully complete a term of service in an approved national service position and perform at least 1,700 hours of national service for a full award (including the required amount of ISP hours, if applicable). Members must complete the program in good standing. Under special circumstances, members may receive a prorated award if members are unable to complete the full term.

### B. Use of Education Award

The education award can be used in the following ways:

- To repay qualified federally-guaranteed existing or future student loans.
- To pay all or part of the cost (tuition, book, lab fees) of attending a qualified institution of higher education (including certain vocational schools). Information about qualified institutions is available at [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov).

## C. Amount of Award

The education award is adjusted based on the amount of the Pell Grant. AmeriCorps members are eligible to earn up to the equivalent of two full time education awards, and they have up to seven years to use the award. The amount of the two full time education awards may be distributed over multiple years of service if a member did not receive the full amount in any given year. Members can use the award only as noted above and may use all or any portion at any time after the completion of the term of service. For example, members may apply a portion of the award to existing qualified student loans and use the remainder to pay for authorized college costs.

Members may apply for an extension of the expiration date of the award if they make the request before the award expires. However, an extension is not automatic and is granted only under certain circumstances (e.g., a member served a second AmeriCorps term of service, served in the Peace Corps, served in the military, or was unavoidably prevented from using the award within the seven-year period the award was in effect).

For further details about the education award, members should visit [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov).

## D. Accessing & Making Payments from the Education Award

Near the completion of a member's term of service, members will be asked to access the My AmeriCorps Portal and complete the exit survey and form. The Member Support Specialist notifies the Office of the National Service Trust that the member successfully completed the program through the approval of that form. Successful completion of the program includes having provided citizenship eligibility documentation at the beginning of the program and the payment of all fines and money owed as a result of damage to, or loss of, government property or disciplinary fines. Failure to pay the fines and/or money owed may either delay or preclude the receipt of the education award. The amount owed is not offset against the education award.

Payments toward your qualified federal student loans and/or college costs must be made through the My AmeriCorps Portal account by accessing the education award tab. Members should click on the "Create an Education Payment Request" under the Education Award tab in the left sidebar; identify and select the institution; enter the service date; and click submit to send the request to the institution. Members should follow-up with the school to ensure they received the money.

## E. Loan & Interest Postponement while Serving in AmeriCorps

Members have the option of postponing repayment of the member's qualified student loans while enrolled in an AmeriCorps program. The type of loan postponement for which AmeriCorps members can apply for is referred to as a forbearance, and it is based upon the member's service with AmeriCorps.

### **Private loans are not eligible for forbearance.**

In order to obtain this benefit, members must submit a Forbearance Request through the My AmeriCorps Portal at the beginning of the member's service. If a member's loan qualifies, the loan holder will process the request accordingly.

It is at the discretion of the member's lender to determine if the member's particular student loan is eligible to be placed in forbearance, or any other type of postponement, while in service.

## F. Interest Payments

If a member has successfully completed a term of service and earned an education award, the National Service Trust will pay all or part of the interest that accrued on qualified student loans during the member's period of service. The accrued interest paid from the Trust is an additional benefit to the member and is not deducted from the member's education award balance.

Unless a member completes the agreed upon term of service or is released from service for compelling personal circumstances, the Trust, by law, cannot pay any interest that accrues on the member's loan(s). Also, the Trust cannot pay any interest outside the period the member was earning an education award. Although the member may find that some loans may not qualify to have interest paid by the Trust, it may be paid under other programs or authorities. The member should check with the loan holders.

In order to request for the Trust to pay for the accrued interest, members must submit an Interest Payment Request through the My AmeriCorps Portal account at the completion of the term of service. Members should click on the "Create Interest Payment Request" under the My Education Award tab in the left sidebar; selecting the loan holder; and clicking submit to send it to the loan holder. If a member's loan qualifies, the loan holder will process the request accordingly.



## Frequently Asked Questions:

The most current information and detailed, updated FAQs are available at [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov). Some general information is provided below:

### 1. What do I need to do to get the education award?

You must successfully complete a term of service as an AmeriCorps NCCC member and perform at least 1,700 hours of service to receive a full award, inclusive of ISP hours.

### 2. What is the amount of the award I will receive?

The amount of your education award depends upon the term of service you complete. If you graduate from AmeriCorps NCCC and complete a full-time (1,700 hours) term of service, you will receive the full education award amount, which is based on the Pell Grant. Pro-rated awards may be available, depending on the circumstances under which you departed AmeriCorps NCCC.

### 3. How many education awards can I receive?

You may receive up to the equivalent of two full education awards in your lifetime for service in any national service position, including AmeriCorps NCCC, AmeriCorps VISTA, or AmeriCorps State and National. The full amount of the two awards could be paid over multiple terms of service if you do not receive the full amount for each of the first two terms of service. You may serve additional terms in other national service positions, but will not be eligible for education awards once you receive the equivalent of two full education awards.

### 4. How long do I have to use my education award?

Unused education awards expire seven years after the member completed service with NCCC, unless an extension is granted. There are a limited number of bases for granting an extension, such as serious illness, service in the Peace Corps or service in another AmeriCorps term. The member must request an extension before the award has expired and may make the request online or by mail. Details of the requirements are sent to the member using the mailing or e-mail address on file in the My AmeriCorps portal prior to the award's expiration date. An award may be extended only one time.

### 5. What happens if I do not complete my full term of service?

A member who has served at least 15 percent of the term of service and is released from service for compelling personal circumstances is eligible to receive a pro-rated award, based on the length of service. Members and Team Leaders who do not successfully complete the term (i.e. graduate), or who are released for cause, are not eligible for any portion of an award.

### 6. What are compelling personal circumstances?

Compelling personal circumstances are those circumstances that are unforeseen or beyond an individual's control. Examples of circumstances that might be considered to be compelling personal circumstances are serious illness/injury to the member or the death of an immediate member of the participant's family (see Section G "Compelling Personal Circumstances" on page 32.)

### 7. Will I have to pay taxes on my education award?

Yes, your education award is taxable in the year it is used. If you use a portion of your award, you must include that portion as income when you file your tax returns for the year in which you use it.

### 8. How can I get some more help figuring out how to save on my federal taxes?

AmeriCorps does not provide tax advice to individuals. If you have questions, you should contact a tax professional or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS):

- The IRS TELETAX (1-800-829-4477) has recorded information on the new education credits (Topic #605) and student loan interest deduction (Topic #456).
- To order free publications and forms, call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676). You can start with Publication 910, Guide to Free Tax Services, and Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Higher Education. These publications are also available on-line.
- The IRS's phone number is 1-800-829-1040.

### 9. Is accrued interest paid on my student loans by the Trust taxable?

Yes, interest payments made by the Trust are considered taxable and are reported to the IRS.

### 10. Should I include my service dates when I request forbearance?

Yes, you should include the dates of service in your request. When submitting your forbearance request in the portal, it will generate all service terms you have enrolled in and will allow you to select from those options.

### 11. How can I get my accrued interest paid?

In order for the Trust to pay the interest that has accrued on a qualified student loan during your term of service, you must go to the My AmeriCorps Portal and submit a request for accrued interest to be paid. When the Trust receives the completed request and it meets the Trust requirements, a payment will be sent to your loan holder.

## **12. Is my award transferable? For example, if I am unable to use it, can I transfer the award to another individual?**

You must be 55 or older when you begin your term of service in order to be eligible to transfer your education award. Additional information on transfer eligibility and conditions is available at [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov).

## **13. Who do I contact if I have other questions?**

You may call the National Service Hotline at AmeriCorps at 1-800-942-2677 or visit the "My Education Award" tab in the My AmeriCorps Portal to have any questions answered.

## **14. How do I access the My AmeriCorps Portal?**

You can access your My AmeriCorps portal at [my.AmeriCorps.gov](http://my.AmeriCorps.gov)

## **G. Effects of Leaving AmeriCorps NCCC before Completion of the Program: Compelling Personal Circumstances**

### **1. Less than 1,700 Hours Completed**

AmeriCorps has designated the Region Director to decide on a case-by-case basis whether a situation warrants that a member receive a pro-rated award. AmeriCorps' position is that the situation must be beyond the member's control. The following are examples of circumstances that could justify the early release of a member and entitle the member to a portion of an award:

- sickness or critical illness of the member
- death or critical illness of a member's immediate family (spouse, parent, sibling, child, or guardian)
- programmatic problems not under the control of the member, i.e., loss of funding

If a member leaves AmeriCorps NCCC service for compelling personal circumstances and has served at least 15 percent of the member's service, the member will be eligible for a portion of the education award corresponding to the period served. To determine the percentage of the award, the number of credible service hours is divided by 1,700 hours. The resulting percentage is then multiplied by the education award to determine the amount of the pro-rated award.

Generally, a member would not be entitled to receive a pro-rated education award if terminating before graduation:

- in order to accept an offer of employment
- because the member finds the work unenjoyable
- because of the size of the living allowance
- in order to move to another area of the country or another country

While these reasons may seem justifiable to individual members, the service activity, campus, and the community will suffer when a member departs. Part of national service is based on a commitment to completing the agreed-upon term of service, as memorialized in the member agreement. If the member resigns for any of these reasons or other reasons that are within the member's control, the individual will receive no portion of the education award.

No pro-rated award is permitted without the approval of the Region Director. The Region Director will be required to make the determination of whether the reason for departure constitutes compelling personal circumstances. The determination will be made at the time of the member's departure and the decision will be indicated on the end of service form that each member is required to complete. When forwarded to AmeriCorps, it will become the substantiating document used to issue awards. Each member who leaves, or wishes to leave, the AmeriCorps NCCC program early will be given the opportunity to apply for an award citing the reasons why the member believes that the award is justified. The Region Director will then determine the validity of the request and provide the documentation to justify the member's recommendation on the end of term of service form.

### **2. At least 1,700 Hours Completed**

With Region Director approval, a member may be permitted to depart the program before graduation if the member has completed at least 1,700 hours of service and is departing in order to meet "a window of opportunity" to enter school or to serve in a National Service position through AmeriCorps State & National, as a VISTA volunteer, a Peace Corps volunteer, or as a member of the Armed Forces. Individuals departing the program may be approved to leave up to 7 days before the documented start date. Proof of acceptance by the institution or program and the institution's/program's requirement to report on a certain date must be documented in writing. If the Region Director does not make a determination that departure is to meet "a window of opportunity," the member will not receive any portion of an education award.

### **3. Review of Region Director's Decision**

Members may appeal a Region Director's decision concerning this section to the National Director, if submitted in writing and within ten days of the Region Director's decision.

## SUMMARY TABLE OF EFFECTS OF EARLY DEPARTURE ON EDUCATION AWARD AMOUNT

IF THE MEMBER HAS SERVED...	SERVES THROUGH GRADUATION?	REGION DIRECTOR DETERMINES THAT EARLY DEPARTURE WAS FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES?	AMOUNT OF EDUCATION AWARD
<b>LESS THAN 1,700 HOURS</b>	YES	N/A	Pro-rated, if Region Director determines that the hour deficiency resulted from circumstances beyond the member's control
	NO	YES	Pro-rated
	NO	NO	None
<b>AT LEAST 1,700 HOURS</b>	YES	N/A	Full
	NO	YES	Full
	NO	NO	None, unless Region Director finds that early departure is required to meet a "window of opportunity".

### Child Care Benefits

AmeriCorps NCCC offers a child care benefit to custodial or joint-custodial parents. The benefit is available to pay for eligible expenses related to child care while a member is in service. The maximum amount of child care assistance a member can receive is \$400 per month per child. The benefit is paid directly to eligible child care providers, not to AmeriCorps NCCC members. To be eligible to receive the benefit:

- the member must be the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 13
- the guardian, or family member, the child is living with must also be either:
  - the child care provider
  - the party responsible for selecting a child care provider for the eligible child. However, the identified child care provider may not be the child's biological, step, or adoptive parent
- the member certifies that child care is needed in order to participate in the program

To apply for the benefit, the member should contact the child care benefit provider through the website at [AmeriCorpschildcare.com](http://AmeriCorpschildcare.com) or by calling 855-886-0687.

### Member Assistance Program

AmeriCorps NCCC members have access to the AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program (MAP). This benefit is available to all members currently serving in the AmeriCorps NCCC program. Through the MAP, members have access to mental health counseling, medical advocacy, life coaching, and work/life resources. The MAP is provided as a benefit to

members for the ongoing self-management and care that is needed while serving in the program. This benefit can be accessed through [www.mylifeexpert.com](http://www.mylifeexpert.com) or by phone at 800-451-1834.

### Emergency Leave & Personal Absences

#### A. Emergency Leave

Emergency leave may be granted in cases of death or under emergency conditions (a threat to life) where the member's presence is mandated. Some documentation may be required to substantiate the request.

The relationship to the member must fall within the following familial relationships:

- Spouse
- Children (including stepchildren, adopted children, and biological children)
- Parents or persons in loco parentis (acting in place of) to the member
- Siblings
- Grandparents

Emergency leave expenses are covered by the NCCC program. Covered expenses include transportation to HOR or an alternative approved location, travel day food, and baggage reimbursement. Members granted emergency leave will be entitled to receive the normal living allowances for a period not to exceed seven calendar days. For absences in excess of seven days, members will be placed on administrative suspension and will be in a no-pay status. This status must be approved by the Region Director. Members will not be entitled to accrue creditable service hours during the member's absence.



## B. Absence for Minor Illness or Injury

It is recognized that there may be occasions when members have a minor illness or injury, such as a common cold, that may not require a medical appointment. Short periods of rest and recuperation may be the best method of treatment and is less costly to the member. A member may elect to take up to two consecutive service or training days as sick days in quarters. Members must report the need for sick days to the Team Leader prior to the scheduled start of the workday.

The Sick Day in Quarters (SIQ) is intended for rest and recuperation. As such, the member must remain in quarters that entire day, so that the member may return the next service day. If a member chooses to remain in quarters for the day, it is understood that the member must remain in quarters throughout the evening as well. Transportation to and from local stores to procure across the counter drugs or other health and comfort items will be coordinated with the respective Unit leader or Team Leader in advance.

In the event the member is unable to return to service or training at the beginning of the third consecutive corps service day, the member must then go on sick call to seek professional medical advice. If, on the third day of SIQ, the member's health is improving but the member is still unable to return to service, the Unit Leader may use discretion in allowing the member to remain in quarters a third day without seeking professional medical attention. Abuse of Sick Days in Quarters procedures may result in disciplinary action.

Members that take significant amounts of sick days may have difficulty in reaching the 1,700 service hours requirement. In these circumstances, members should speak with NCCC staff to understand available options.

## C. Personal Absences

Members are authorized three personal days leave during the term of service. Living allowances will be paid during the approved personal leave. Service hours will not be earned during personal days. It should be noted that members do not accrue time off or vacation time except for those national holidays and authorized breaks, as established in the program calendar.

In no instance will paid personal absences exceed three days during the program duration. There may be extenuating circumstances where a member may request and receive unpaid personal leave beyond the three paid days. Members who do not meet the criteria for emergency leave, but who believe that the circumstances require the presence away from the campus, project site, or program, may submit a written request for personal leave through the Team Leader and unit staff to the

Region Director at least five working days before the start date of the requested personal absence. If approved, and at the discretion of the Region Director, members will be granted a personal absence for an approved period of time.

## D. Life After AmeriCorps Days

Members are authorized two Life After AmeriCorps days leave during the term of service, subject to the approval of the member's Unit Leader. Living allowances will be paid during and training hours will be earned for approved Life After AmeriCorps days.

## E. Absent Without Leave (AWOL)

Members AWOL from AmeriCorps NCCC may be subject to a dismissal hearing. A member is considered to be AWOL when they have been absent from a worksite or NCCC-directed activity (e.g. a training or scheduled team departure) without an approved excuse. Members who are AWOL for 3 consecutive calendar days may be considered dismissed from the program as a result of being AWOL.

## Travel To & From Campus

AmeriCorps NCCC will cover most forms of transportation to and from camps. These include:

- travel from the member's Home of Record (HOR) to the campus;
- to and from an approved Medical Hold location;
- member travel to HOR from the campus upon the end of service;
- Team Leader relocation allowance upon beginning and completion of the Team Leader's service term; and
- Special Purpose Travel, e.g., conferences, special events, etc.

## A. Travel Methods

The following outlines the options a member has when determining how to travel to/from campus.

### 1. Travel by Commercial Carrier

#### a. Plane, Train, and Bus Tickets

Members authorized to travel via air or bus will be provided a ticket issued by the AmeriCorps NCCC. The electronic ticket will be sent to members electronically (proper government issued picture ID will be required at the airport). Departing members will be provided the itinerary for an e-ticket or actual ticket the day of departure from the campus. After the tickets are issued, any changes must be done through the Member Support Specialist. AmeriCorps NCCC will not pay for any changes to the ticket.

The airline selected for use on specific routes is mandated (through pre-negotiated Government Services Agency contracts) and cannot be changed by AmeriCorps NCCC. Airlines and travel agents will not issue cash refunds to members for common carrier tickets issued by AmeriCorps NCCC. Credits are issued to AmeriCorps NCCC. In the rare case where AmeriCorps NCCC is unable to provide a pre-paid bus ticket, the member will be directed to purchase the bus ticket and then submit a Claim for Reimbursement during campus in-processing. If a member prefers not to travel by the method provided by AmeriCorps NCCC, the member should consider purchasing a bus/rail/air ticket using the method described in the "Other Travel Options" section.

#### **b. Plane**

If the trip between the member's HOR and campus is over 50 miles, an airline ticket will be purchased by the Member Support Specialist and provided to the member. At the request of the member, a bus or rail ticket may be purchased, but only if it is less expensive to the government than a plane ticket.

Members are allowed reimbursement for transportation to the terminal when traveling over 50 miles between the HOR and the airport or bus for the one-way trip at the current authorized mileage rate, as determined by the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). Mileage will be verified by a staff member.

#### **c. Bus**

The use of a bus requires authorization by the Region Director. This is due to increased cost, transportation time, and scheduling difficulty.

#### **d. Airline Baggage**

In order to be reimbursed for the one bag, the incoming members must provide the AmeriCorps NCCC staff an airline baggage fee receipt from the airline carrier or a Missing Receipt Form 403 (if the member does not have the receipt). The member Support Specialist will prepare the AmeriCorps NCCC Form 311, Obligating and Payment Voucher and provide it to the AmeriCorps NCCC staff for reimbursement to the member.

Outgoing members will be reimbursed to cover the expected baggage reimbursement costs. Debit card and baggage costs will be determined by the Member Support Specialist after receiving the flight itineraries from Travel Management Agency. No receipt from the member is necessary; after all, the members will be flying home and unable to show the receipt for baggage costs. The Member Support Specialist will prepare an AmeriCorps NCCC Form 311, Obligating and Payment Voucher, which will be used as a receipt to account for the payment.

AmeriCorps NCCC only reimburses for the first checked bag at the standard rate with no additional fees for overages of size or weight.

#### **2. Travel via Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)**

Members travelling by POV will be reimbursed at the standard federal mileage reimbursement rate. A staff member will use an online mapping service to determine the total number of miles authorized for reimbursement. This reimbursement is intended to cover transportation expenses (although it may not cover all costs associated with lodging/subsistence). The total amount claimed cannot exceed \$275. The mileage rate usually changes from year to year. Mileage is authorized for only one member per vehicle. If the member is a passenger traveling in another member's POV, the passenger member is entitled to \$0.10 per mile, with a maximum of \$90. Mitigating circumstances, such as detours for road construction or adverse weather conditions, will be considered, provided written justification is submitted with the travel claim.

Rental vehicles, such as cars or moving vans, will be considered under the same policy as POVs.

#### **3. Other Travel Options**

If approved in advance by the Region Director or designee, departing members may elect to purchase transportation tickets with personal funds and be reimbursed by submitting a receipt. The member will be reimbursed only up to either the actual cost of the ticket purchased or the cost of a similar government fare ticket, whichever is less based on the fare between the HOR and the campus.

If a member decides to stay within the area of the campus after graduation, the member has up to 14 calendar days prior to the date of graduation to purchase a ticket for departure travel and receive reimbursement for a ticket purchased with personal funds. Documentation/proof of travel must be received prior to the member's completion of the program to be eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement requests will not be processed after the member is no longer active in the member portal. The member will be reimbursed only up to either the actual cost of the ticket purchased or the cost of a similar government fare ticket, whichever is less based on the fare between the HOR and the campus facility.

#### **4. Miscellaneous Expenses**

The shipment of personal belongings is a member responsibility. Members will not be reimbursed for the shipment of any items to or from the campus. AmeriCorps NCCC staff generally may not ship a member's personal belongings without prior authorization from the Region Director.

## B. Campus Arrival

AmeriCorps NCCC will assist members with transportation arrangements and expenses to the designated campus based upon the member's HOR.

Upon acceptance into the program, Candidates will be required to complete the Travel Profile electronically on My AmeriCorps Portal account. After the completion and submission of the Travel profile online form, it will be approved and locked by the Member Support Specialist. If you need to make updates on the form, inform the Member Support Specialist to unlock it and make the change.

Submission of this form by the requested date is critical for making travel arrangements in a timely manner, notifying the candidate of the travel arrangements, and subsequently permitting the candidate to plan the arrival accordingly.

## C. Campus Departure

### 1. Completion of Program Travel

During the final months of service, the Member Support Specialist will complete travel paperwork to provide information for departure travel. Based upon this information, the members will be prepaid any travel entitlement by debit card or receive an electronic ticket from the campus on the day of out-processing. Members will be reimbursed for one bag when traveling by commercial carrier or mileage up to \$275 for driver reimbursement or \$90 for passenger reimbursement.

In order for a member to make an official change to the member's HOR for return travel, member must complete Change of HOR Request Form, but not later than one month prior to graduation from the program. The letter should request approval for a new HOR and include an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the requested change. In addition to the explanation for the change in the HOR, the member may be required to provide additional documentation that substantiates the change in HOR.

Departing members receive the itineraries approximately two weeks before departure date.

### 2. Early Departure for Program/Termination Travel

Members are authorized a one-way travel expenses for return to the HOR upon voluntary or involuntary early termination from the program at the expense of AmeriCorps NCCC. The entitlements are the same as those described in "Travel to & from Campus, Section A.3. Other Options".

## D. Team Leader Relocation Allowance

The purpose of the Team Leader relocation allowance is to assist the Team Leaders in transferring personal items from the HOR to the designated campus. Each new Team Leader will be provided a

relocation allowance of \$250. The Team Leader will receive reimbursement via a debit card. If a Team Leader is transferred to another campus during the program year, the campus will ship the Team Leader's personal effects and provide transportation to the new campus. There will not be a relocation allowance for this transfer. If a member is promoted to Team Leader, the member is not entitled to receive the relocation allowance because the member is already on campus.

Team Leaders that are serving consecutive terms as Team Leaders will not receive a new relocation allowance for the new Team Leader term. Team Leaders that are serving another term as a Team Leader following break in service of more than three months will receive a new relocation allowance for this new Team Leader term.

Upon successful completion of the Team Leader service, the Team Leader will be entitled to a \$250 relocation allowance. Early termination of the Team Leader's service, whether voluntary or involuntary, will result in forfeiture of the second \$250 relocation allowance.

## E. Travel Not Covered by AmeriCorps NCCC

Personal, non-official travel will be neither arranged nor funded by AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps NCCC cannot provide advances or loans to members for these expenses. It is not permissible to use AmeriCorps' travel agency, or to receive a government rate ticket, when traveling for personal reasons.







# CAMPUS LIVING

## Campus Living

### A. General

#### 1. Roommates

Residences are co-ed; any member may opt-in for housing consistent with their gender expression and NCCC will make reasonable efforts to accommodate all individual requests for housing while on campus.

#### 2. Assignment of Roommates

To fulfill NCCC's statutory responsibility of bringing together young Americans from diverse backgrounds, roommates are assigned to encourage opportunities to learn about other cultures and backgrounds. Upon arrival, members will be assigned to a specific room in a residence hall. Requests for room changes are to be submitted in writing to the Residence Coordinator or other designated staff person and should include an explanation for the move request. While the overall well-being and morale of the members will always be held as top priority, occasions may arise when it is necessary that a member be required to move to another room. Any such action will be communicated in writing and will include an explanation for the required relocation and a timeline for completing the move.

#### 3. Bathroom Facilities

Members will use the bathroom assigned to them. Members should not use bathroom facilities not assigned to them.

#### 4. Attire

During leisure hours, members may wear the clothing of choice that is appropriate, non-offensive, and in compliance with the standards of the host facility.

#### 5. Firearms & Other Weapons

Possession of any firearm or other weapon (e.g., knives with blades longer than three inches, brass knuckles, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

#### 6. Security

Residents are responsible for the security of personal possessions. Rooms should be locked and valuables secured when the room is unoccupied, and outside doors should be secured for the safety of residents.

#### 7. Security Problems

Residents are responsible for reporting unescorted visitors and other security/safety problems to the Team Leader or Residence Coordinator.

#### 8. Quiet Hours

Quiet hours will normally be from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Sundays through Thursdays, and from midnight to 9:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. The term "quiet hours" means that the residence halls and campus complex will be free of loud noises. Complaints from other residents about excessive noise may result in appropriate disciplinary action. These hours may be modified at the discretion of the Region Director.

#### 9. Visitation

In order to create a community that respects the rights and privacy of all members, no person will be allowed in another person's dorm room (excluding roommate) from midnight to 7:00 a.m. This rule applies seven days a week and there are no exceptions; between 10 p.m. and midnight, a member must have the roommate's verbal consent for any other AmeriCorps NCCC member, regardless of gender, to be in the member's room.

#### 10. Sexual Contact

Individuals will refrain from all forms of sexual contact while on duty and while on, or in close proximity to, AmeriCorps NCCC property, in AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles, and in facilities, lodging, or vehicles provided by a sponsor organization.

### B. Rooms

#### 1. Cleanliness

Each member will be held responsible for the cleanliness of the member's assigned room. Beds are to be made daily, all clothing and personal items should be stored neatly, trash cans emptied, and floors free of debris.

#### 2. Privacy

Dorm room privacy operates on the honor code; individual privacy is to be respected at all times. Members should knock before entering, ask before borrowing, and never enter someone else's room without permission.

#### 3. Inspections

There will be periodic room inspections to ensure the health, safety, and cleanliness of the member's room (see Inspections, Section A, Staff Inspections). These inspections may be unannounced.



#### 4. Food Storage

Food must be properly stored or otherwise disposed of in a sanitary manner to prevent insect infestation. Food such as bread, crackers, cookies, and cereal must be kept in air-tight tins or plastic containers/bags.

#### 5. Cooking Appliances

Storage or use of microwaves (unless approved by the Region Director or designee), hot plates, broilers, rice steamers, or cooking appliances in member rooms are prohibited. These items will be removed and stored until completion of the program.

#### 6. Fire Hazards

To avoid fires, candles, incense, or open flames are prohibited.

#### 7. Flammable Materials

Storage or use of flammable materials, such as gasoline, paint thinners, camping fuel, or any other explosive or highly flammable materials in individual rooms is prohibited.

#### 8. Other Appliances

The use of radios, stereos, televisions, and coffee makers is authorized provided such equipment does not create a fire hazard and is compliant with local policies. Coffee makers, hair dryers, irons, curling irons, etc., should be unplugged when not in use.

#### 9. Electrical Devices

Use of an electrical device that is not properly grounded is prohibited.

#### 10. Noise

Excessive noise resulting in complaints from other residents will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

#### 11. Personal Property

AmeriCorps NCCC is not responsible or liable for loss of, or damage to, a member's personal property, including monies loaned between members. High-value items—such as high value electronic equipment, video systems, video games, expensive jewelry or other such items—are the sole responsibility of the member. AmeriCorps NCCC advises members not to bring any high value items. If members bring high value items to the program, the members do so at the member's own risk. Rooms should be locked when no one is in the room.

#### 12. Linens

Members will furnish personal linens.

### C. Common Areas

All members are expected to carry out assigned dormitory cleaning duties. Common areas will be cleaned daily, and, at a minimum, the following tasks will be completed:

- sweep hallways, porches, and stairways
- mop and disinfect bathroom floors and shower stalls
- scrub and disinfect sinks, toilets, and urinals
- empty trash
- take out recycling materials
- clean mirrors
- clean laundry room (if applicable)
- clean up after yourself

If common area or room cleaning duties are not properly completed, the member may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### D. Fire Prevention/Safety

#### 1. Fire Alarms & Exits

Each member shall be familiar with the location of fire alarms, exits, and extinguishers. Each member shall also be familiar with the contents of posted evacuation plans.

#### 2. Activating Alarms

Each member shall be familiar with the location of fire alarms, exits, and extinguishers. Each member shall also be familiar with the contents of posted evacuation plans.

#### 3. Evacuating the Building

Upon hearing or seeing the alarm, everyone will leave the residence hall by the nearest exit and assemble by teams in a predetermined location a sufficient distance from the dorm so that firefighting personnel can accomplish the member's task. Team Leaders will account for all Corps members on the team and provide such information to the Unit Leader or appropriate staff member.

#### 4. Failure to Respond to Fire Alarms

Failure to respond appropriately to fire alarms (including drills) may result in disciplinary action.

#### 5. Fire Prevention & Safety Policies

All members must be familiar with the fire prevention and safety policies of the living quarters and service sites.



## E. Visitors & Visitation

### 1. Definition

Anyone who is not a member of the AmeriCorps NCCC assigned campus and is not assigned to the dorm (room or house) is considered a visitor.

### 2. Check in

All visitors must comply with AmeriCorps NCCC policies.

### 3. Rules & Regulations

Visitors will be accompanied by a member, who will advise the visitor of all rules and regulations.

### 4. Visitation Hours

Visitors are not authorized to remain in dormitories or on other campus or spike housing overnight and will not be allowed in rooms during quiet hours (see "Quiet Hours" in Campus Living, Section A(8))

All visitors must follow local visitor check in procedures as determined by the region.

## Inspections

### A. Staff Inspections

#### 1. Periodic Inspections

Health, safety, and sanitation inspections will be conducted periodically by AmeriCorps NCCC staff. Inspections will be conducted in pairs and may be announced or unannounced. Members do not have to be present during an inspection.

#### 2. Purpose of Inspections

Inspections are limited to the purposes for which they are authorized and should not involve the examination of any desk, bureau, trunk, or other presumptively private container. Unlocked closets and refrigerators may be inspected to ensure that they are clean and orderly.

#### 3. Evidence of Crime

If a staff member should see evidence of a crime in plain view, the staff member is responsible for reporting the observation to the Unit Leader, Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership, or Region Director and ensuring that the evidence is safeguarded until it is turned over to the appropriate authorities.

#### 4. Probable Cause

Inspections should not be used to search for illegal items or evidence of a crime. Officials must base any search under the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on probable cause and comply with search and seizure requirements.

### B. Other Official Inspections

Public health, public safety, and fire officials may conduct routine inspections of residence hall rooms

and storage areas to promote the overall health and welfare of all residents. These inspections may result in disciplinary action for any individual who is responsible for violations of AmeriCorps NCCC policy.

Inspectors must be accompanied by AmeriCorps NCCC staff inspecting a member's room for health and safety purposes. These inspections can occur at any time and do not require the presence of the member. As stated above, inspections by public safety and fire officials are also limited to the purposes for which they are authorized and should not involve the examination of any desk, bureau, trunk, or other presumptively private container.

Unlocked closets and refrigerators may be inspected to ensure that they are safe and clean. If an inspector should see evidence of a crime in plain view, the inspector has the responsibility to report observation to law enforcement authorities.

All mail and packages sent to the campus facility are subject to inspection and mail and packages that appear suspicious may be opened.

### C. Emergency Entries

#### 1. Fire Officials

Fire officials may lawfully enter an individual's room without permission to search for, or to confirm the presence of a fire or related dangers.

#### 2. Law Enforcement & Other Officials

Any person, including law enforcement officials, may enter a member's room without permission in order to search for, rescue, evacuate, or treat fire or disaster victims, or otherwise save lives or property from destruction.

#### 3. Seizure of Evidence

In the course of assisting at a fire or disaster, police officers may lawfully seize any evidence of a crime they observe in plain view for purposes of prosecution. Since they are lawfully on the premises, they do not need to obtain a warrant.

#### 4. Fire Officials/Evidence

Fire officials have a responsibility to report any evidence of a crime they have observed to law enforcement officials. However, a police officer who seeks to enter a member's room solely to investigate such a report is under legal obligation to comply with search and seizure requirements.

## Privately Owned Vehicles (POV)

Personal vehicles kept on campus must meet the following conditions:

- The owner must have a valid operator's license and, if required, must obtain a local license. Proof of a valid driver's license must be provided to the designated AmeriCorps NCCC staff for verification. Motorcycle operators must show proof of completion of an appropriate training course.
- The vehicle must be properly titled and licensed. Proof of vehicle registration must be provided to the designated AmeriCorps NCCC staff person.
- If required by the state, the vehicle must bear a current valid inspection sticker at all times.
- All private vehicles and operators must be covered under the local minimum vehicle liability insurance requirement. Proof of current coverage must be provided to the designated AmeriCorps NCCC staff person.
- Personal vehicles will not be used for any AmeriCorps NCCC official business, except as approved by the Region Director for individual transportation to and from individual service projects or as otherwise authorized by the Region Director after consultation with the National Director.
- For purposes of safety and accountability, any member traveling over 100 miles from the AmeriCorps NCCC campus in a personal vehicle must notify in writing to the Unit Leader.
- Vehicles are parked and stored on campus at the risk of the owner. AmeriCorps NCCC assumes no liability for theft or damage to privately owned vehicles. Vehicles will not remain on AmeriCorps NCCC premises after the end of the program year.
- Legal difficulties that may result from the use of private vehicles on or off campus are the responsibility of the owner. Local authorities may restrict/deny driving privileges to individuals who violate traffic laws on the campus compounds.

## Use of Government Vehicles

### A. Official Purposes for Use of Government Vehicles

AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles may be used only for official purposes. Official purposes for government vehicle use include:

- transportation to and from project sites
- transporting authorized visitors, project sponsors, members, and others in the standard conduct of government business

- vehicle maintenance
- spike preparation
- transporting members to and from sick call and doctor appointments
- obtaining other project support when authorized by the Unit Leader
- official functions or training in support of the program
- team or personal needs shopping, e.g. grocery shopping or other personal needs shopping
- structured Leisure Activities (SLA), ISPs, service learning activities, and specialty role activities

### B. Approval for Use of Government Vehicles during Local Projects

While on local projects, all government vehicle use for SLA activities must be approved by the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership. With Unit Leader approval, a government vehicle can be used for ISPs.

Government vehicles may not be used for any other purpose not listed in Section A above without the express authorization of the Region Director.

### C. Approval for Use of Government Vehicles during Spikes

While on spike, van usage approval for ISPs, service learning activities, specialty role activities, and Structured Leisure Activities (SLA) is as follows:

- with Team Leader approval, trips within a 25 mile radius
- with Unit Leader approval, trips in a 26-100 miles radius
- with Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership approval, trips over a 100 mile radius

Van usage is expected to occur within hours that are consistent with work periods, meal times, or authorized team events. Vans must be parked at either spike housing or at the campus between the hours of 12:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m., unless the team received prior approval from the Unit Leader.

AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles cannot be provided to sponsors for personal use. They can be used as part of a team project but can only be driven by AmeriCorps NCCC certified members or Team Leaders.

Whenever possible, if local public transportation is available and appropriate, it may be utilized in lieu of government vehicles.

## 1. Parking Garages

Van drivers will not enter or park in parking garages without Unit Leader approval because:

- parking garages are not designed for, and are difficult to navigate, in large vehicles such as 15 passenger vans
- there have been a high number of accidents such as roof scrapes and turning damage to vehicle sides in parking garages

Unit Leaders may approve teams using parking garages for parking at project locations with the following conditions:

- no other reasonable non-garage parking is available in the vicinity
- the Team Leader verifies the garage is of a sufficient layout to enable vans to safely navigate (clearance, parking space size, turning radius, etc.)

## D. Transport of Non AmeriCorps Members

The Region Director may approve the transport of approved visitors, project sponsors or training facilitators, AmeriCorps or other government employees (to include FEMA staff, USFS staff or reservists) in the conduct of the project or training session is authorized:

- when it is in the best interests of the project or the government
- during an immediate disaster response
- to consolidate the number of vehicles when there is a request to restrict vehicles in a disaster zone

At no time will the vehicle be used to transport groups such as school children or similar groups. For example, transporting children at a camp site from one end of the camp site to the other is not permitted.

The Region Director can authorize the transportation of other people if extenuating circumstances exist.

## E. Training & Certification Drivers

Members who drive government vehicles must first be trained and certified through classroom instruction and a road test. Additionally, driving records will be checked to ensure individuals are legally qualified to drive motor vehicles, that the driving histories are appropriate, and that they possess a current license.

Once certified as a driver, it is the member's responsibility to maintain a valid driver's license or inform staff if it expires. In addition, member driving is a privilege that can be suspended at any time.

Team Leaders and Unit Leaders may suspend/revoke driver certifications and/or driving privileges based on accidents, safety concerns, concerning driver evaluations, etc.

## F. Vehicle & Driving Safety

Travel speed for members must never exceed 65 miles per hour, regardless of higher posted limits. Actual driving time must not exceed ten hours per day. Drivers, and Assistant Drivers, must rotate after each two hour interval, or shorter, as determined by fatigue and road or weather conditions. Night driving shall only occur with Unit Leader authorization when necessary to meet program requirements, such as travel to and from the spike site or other required travel.

Proper seat belt usage is mandatory in all government vehicles at all times. At least one AmeriCorps NCCC trained ground guide is required when backing up, or when navigating tight conditions. Drivers and Assistant Drivers are prohibited from operating cell phones, tablets, laptops, or using headphones while operating an AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor-provided vehicle. They may only be used by Assistant Drivers for work-related functions (navigation, answering the TL phone, etc.).

If the use of trailers is necessary, the assigned vehicle driver must be trained and approved, by the Unit Leader, to operate a vehicle with a trailer.

## G. Emergencies

Only those members designated, trained, and certified as drivers may operate vans or other government vehicles. The only exception to this general rule is during an emergency. Emergencies are defined as those situations where the safety, health, or life of a member or other individual requires immediate movement of a vehicle and a certified driver is not available. Any driver with a current driver's license can operate a government vehicle in case of emergency.

## H. Responsibility of Team Leaders and Authorized Drivers

Team Leaders and authorized drivers shall exercise caution and discretion in authorizing the use of AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles. To allow the unofficial use of AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles may place the Team Leader in a legally precarious position, as that individual could be held personally liable should an accident occur and it is determined that the accident did not occur within the scope of the driver's official duties.



## I. Responsibility of Authorizing Officials

AmeriCorps NCCC drivers are responsible for all parking, speeding, or traffic tickets they receive while operating an AmeriCorps NCCC vehicle. The payment of all fines is the sole responsibility of the driver, not of AmeriCorps NCCC. AmeriCorps NCCC will not officially represent any member if the member is required to appear in court for traffic violations.

Incidents that result in points added to a member's driving record during the AmeriCorps NCCC program must be reported to the driver's Unit Leader, no matter when or in what vehicle the incident occurred. This is because a member's driving history influences whether the member is considered suitable, or remains suitable, to be an AmeriCorps NCCC certified driver.

## J. Accident Reporting Procedures

Collisions with other vehicles or objects must be reported immediately to the driver's Unit Leader. The driver's AmeriCorps NCCC driving privileges will be immediately suspended pending an investigation and reinstated at the discretion of the Unit Leader. In the event of an accident, all drivers will follow the GSA and AmeriCorps NCCC reporting and notification procedures. A GSA - SF91 Motor Vehicle Accident Report and GSA - SF94 Statement of Witness must be properly completed and submitted to the Unit Leader.

Photographs of both vehicles and the respective damages must be taken. Sufficient photographs should be taken to ensure proper visual documentation of all vehicles and the scene of the accident or incident. Accident reports and files for all accidents must be submitted to the Unit Leader within 24 hours of the accident. The witness statements must be legible and factually complete.

## K. Ground Guide Exceptions

Team Leaders may be excused from using ground guides under specific circumstances such as conducting sick call, carrying out administrative and/or logistical duties and emergency situations when a Team leader is the only person available. The Team Leader must still walk around the vehicle to determine if it is safe to proceed. However, reasonable efforts should always be taken to locate a ground guide before backing up a vehicle without a ground guide.

## Use of Sponsor Vehicles

Sponsor vehicles may be driven by AmeriCorps NCCC members only for official purposes and when AmeriCorps NCCC vehicles are unavailable, or when

sponsor vehicles are required for a particular service task. Prior approval by the Unit Leader is required and only AmeriCorps NCCC approved drivers may operate sponsor vehicles. For traditional AmeriCorps NCCC, the sponsor agreement must indicate that the sponsor will assume liability for an AmeriCorps NCCC member driving its vehicles.

FEMA Corps members may drive FEMA fleet or rental vehicles under the following conditions:

1. Only AmeriCorps NCCC-approved drivers may drive FEMA vehicles
2. Driving the vehicle falls within the scope of driver's official duties.

An approved driver must receive appropriate training before using certain types of sponsor vehicles, such as bobcats, golf carts, backhoes, tractors, and forklifts.

Members are not authorized to use vehicles that are not officially affiliated with the sponsoring organization (i.e., a friend of the sponsor or another volunteer's vehicle).

In addition to complying with the safety standards in this handbook, members must also adhere to any additional vehicle safety standards set by FEMA and USFS or sponsor organizations.



# WELFARE OF MEMBERS

## Safety

### A. Training & Certification

All members will be trained to operate any and all equipment assigned to them. Under no circumstances shall members operate any piece of equipment unless qualified to do so and authorized by the Team Leader or supervisor. Certification will be obtained when and where required.

AmeriCorps NCCC staff will work with project sponsors to identify potential hazards and tools and equipment to be used; however, project requirements often change and all members must be diligent to be aware of one's own safety and avoid potential hazards. Any member can propose a work stoppage to the Team Leader or project sponsor if the member believes an act or situation is unsafe.

Members in the NCCC Forest Corps program must successfully complete all USFS required trainings and certifications. Forest Corps members must also successfully complete the arduous level Workforce Capacity Test (WCT), in which the member will carry a 45-pound pack, hiking 3 miles, in 45 minutes or less.

### B. Use of Hand Tools

The following guidelines will be observed when using hand tools:

- Members must use and treat tools in a professional and appropriate manner. For example, handles should be tightly fitted, secured with a wedge, and inspected for splitting, warping, and absence of splinters.
- Always use sharp tools, as dull tools are dangerous.
- Keep tool guards in position on cutting edges during transportation to and from project sites and while not in use.
- Never throw or play with tools.
- Inventory and clean all tools at the end of each day and return them to the appropriate storage areas. Report any discrepancies to the Unit Leader and Project Sponsor.

### C. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Members shall be alert and apply common sense at all times when operating power equipment. Inappropriate and unsafe behavior will not be tolerated. The mandatory use of PPE may be required by project sponsors, Team Leaders, or Unit Leaders.

### 1. Protective Clothing & Equipment

Protective clothing and equipment such as hard hats, gloves, safety boots, and foul weather gear, also known as personal protective equipment (PPE), will be issued to AmeriCorps NCCC members as necessary. Such clothing or equipment remains the property of the government and, except for expendable or worn-out items, must be returned to the campus upon termination or when no longer needed. Members who lose this equipment may be required to replace items at the member's own expense. Instruction in the proper use and maintenance of such clothing and equipment will be provided.

### 2. Eye Protection

Eye protection must be worn while using or operating grinders, chainsaws, chippers, stump cutters, hammers or sledge hammers; sawing stranded cable or wire rope; and while painting above one's head. Under no circumstances will face shields be worn in place of safety glasses; they may be worn over the safety glasses.

### 3. Hard Hats & Steel-Toes Boots

Hard hats and steel-toed boots must be worn at all times at appropriate project sites, and when carrying or sharpening tools. Under no circumstances will soft caps or soft athletic shoes be worn in place of hard hats or proper work boots.

### 4. Hearing Protection

Hearing protection must be used when operating or working near:

- routers, circular or table saws, or other power tools
- wood chippers, jack hammers, or other mechanical equipment
- tractors, back hoes, or other motorized equipment that has the potential of causing hearing damage, as determined by the Team Leader and/or Project Sponsor
- any other area where the Team Leader or Project Sponsor determines there is the potential for hearing damage

## 5. Safety Gear with Chain Saw

Safety chaps, bibs, or pants must be worn any time a member uses a chain saw. Also, members must wear protective gloves, eye protection, hearing protection and a helmet with ear muffs and a face shield attached. Members must receive chainsaw training from an AmeriCorps NCCC approved trainer before operating a chainsaw, even if the member has prior experience.

## 6. Gloves

Except in rare cases, members must wear gloves while working on project sites and when carrying or sharpening tools.

## 7. Dust Masks & Respirators

Properly fitted/fitting disposable dust masks or respirators must be worn when spraying paint, working with treated wood or plaster, or engaging in any other activity that results in dust, fumes, mists, or other possible harmful conditions.

## D. Drinking Water

All teams will be supplied with a water container that is to be taken to project sites where potable running water is not readily available. Team Leaders will ensure that drinking water is available at all times.

## E. Transportation Safety

During transportation to and from AmeriCorps NCCC activities, members will be seated inside the vehicle in which they are riding. No one will stand up, ride the tailgate, ride the running board, or ride outside of any vehicle. Proper restraints (seat belts/shoulder restraints) must be worn at all times. Ground guides must be used when backing up, or pulling in or out of tight spaces, in 15-passenger vans or in other vehicles with limited visibility. Individuals will not operate cell phones in any manner whatsoever, to include texting, or use headphones while operating an AmeriCorps NCCC or sponsor-provided vehicle.

## F. Life Jackets

Members working in or around water must wear approved life jackets. This includes, but is not limited to, persons working in boats or barges and cleaning streams in deep areas (where members can no longer stand). When waders and/or hip boots are required, they must be equipped with steel toes. Members working over ice-covered water will carry and secure a rope of at least 20 feet.

## G. Tool Storage

Tools will be properly stowed at all times while in transport in vehicles.

## H. Fuel Storage

Fuel will only be transported in approved containers. At no time will fuel or other hazardous chemicals be transported in the passenger compartment of any vehicle.

## I. Hunting-Related Hazards

Due to the extreme hazards associated with hunting seasons, AmeriCorps NCCC teams must exercise extreme caution in any area where it is reasonable to assume that hunters will be present. Team Leaders, staff, and project sponsors should be alert to any hunting-related hazards and work together to ensure team safety. In some cases, it may be necessary for members to wear blaze orange safety clothing.

## J. Safety Responsibilities

### 1. Corps Members

Corps members will be monitored by Team Leaders and Unit Leaders to ensure that they are using safety equipment properly and responsibly. In cooperation with Deputy Region Director for Programming, they will ensure that project sponsors provide appropriate training in the use of unfamiliar equipment and will participate in planning and/or presenting such training instruction. Corps members have an obligation to state any concerns to Team Leaders and/or site supervisors if they are engaged in a task they believe puts them in an unsafe situation.

### 2. Team Leaders

Team Leaders are responsible for the day-to-day safety of the teams and for maintaining a safe working environment. They will conduct a safety briefing prior to commencing work each day. They will ensure that safety equipment, tools, and machinery are in good working order and in a good state of repair. Unsafe equipment will be reported and not used until repaired. This includes equipment borrowed from other entities.



### 3. Corps Members & Team Leaders

Team Leaders will receive first aid/CPR/AED training. In addition, members receive training in accident prevention and will adhere to the following:

- Comply with state and federal safety regulations and laws (including highway laws), and the AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps NCCC, or host facility policies and/or directives.
- Maintain and safeguard all equipment assigned to them. Corps members are also responsible for advising Team Leaders or supervisors of the condition of the equipment.
- Identify any medications they are using that could affect the safe operation of tools and vehicles.
- Ensure that all passengers riding in the vehicles wear appropriate restraining devices.
- Not smoke, burn candles or incense, or create a fire safety hazard in the rooms.

### K. Sanctions

Any violation of the above rules will be investigated and, when appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

## Hazardous Materials

AmeriCorps NCCC staff will ensure that hazards posed through the use of all chemicals both on campus and at work sites are evaluated, and that information concerning these hazards is provided during training sessions.

### A. Container Labeling

Each container holding hazardous material must be clearly labeled according to its contents and must display the appropriate hazard warning. Removing or defacing such labels is strictly prohibited.

### B. Project Hazardous Materials Awareness

Members should be aware of all hazardous materials on or around a project site. Awareness includes a site inspection by the Team Leader and the Vehicle, Safety, Transportation (VST) Specialty Team member and a briefing by the project sponsor.

## Physical Training

Members will participate in team conditioning at least three times weekly. This conditioning will be team-based. The conditioning program is important because AmeriCorps NCCC undertakes hard, physical work and members need to be strong and limber enough to engage in it safely. During the Corps Member Training Institute (CTI), which takes place during the first weeks of the program, physical

conditioning will be conducted by units or the entire corps to the extent practicable.

## A. Safety Considerations

### 1. Warm-Up Stretching

All exercises must be preceded by an appropriate warm-up and stretching period and followed by an appropriate cool-down period.

### 2. Road Guards

All jogging/running formations will be accompanied by road guards wearing reflective orange vests and carrying flashlights, if appropriate.

### 3. Weather Conditions

Weather conditions will be considered at all times to determine the safety and feasibility of conducting physical training. No outdoor activities will be conducted whenever thunder is audible or lightning is visible.

### 4. Health Concerns

No individual will be required to participate in any exercise that is reasonably beyond the individual's physical capability or that would constitute a direct threat to the member's health.

## B. Prohibitions

Under no circumstances will physical training be assigned as a disciplinary measure. If members refuse to participate or do not participate in good faith, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

## C. Standards of Physical Training

### 1. Physical Fitness

The AmeriCorps NCCC community subscribes to the principle of physical fitness for all members.

### 2. Exercise & Conditioning

Members will engage in a regular and routine fitness regimen for exercise and conditioning while recognizing physically limiting conditions that exist among members.

### 3. Fitness Goal

The regimen utilizes levels of fitness in order to accommodate the differences in the community, with the goal being to have the members reach beyond personal limits to new heights of physical stamina.

### 4. Continuity

Physical training will not be sacrificed in any manner. Provisions exist at each campus to provide for continuity in the fitness program regardless of weather, facilities, or program conflicts.

## 5. Cohesiveness

Routine physical training provides the team with cohesiveness.

## 6. Benefits

Physical Training is an essential means of promoting personal development, physical fitness, and self-confidence in the Corps while enhancing members' overall wellbeing. Physical Training is intended to be a team-based conditioning program that supports the healthy sustainment, improvement, and overall quality level of physical fitness for members.

## 7. Responsibilities

All members are responsible for the weekly physical training program to ensure a safe and effective physical training program for the team.

## 8. Labor Intensive Work Expectations

NCCC Forest Corps members must, in addition to successfully completing the Work Capacity Test, complete labor-intensive work, including wildland fire incident response, use of hand tools/chainsaws, trail maintenance, tree planting, etc. Throughout CTI, NCCC Forest Corps members must complete two additional PT sessions, in addition to the required three team-based sessions, to prepare for labor-intensive project work.

## Inclement Weather

Members should be prepared to spend a substantial amount of time outdoors. Light rain, cold weather, or snow on the ground will not stop AmeriCorps NCCC teams from completing service projects. Team leaders, Unit Leaders, and worksite supervisors should agree when working conditions are not appropriate for the team to continue working on the project. AmeriCorps NCCC teams should receive training as to how to recognize and respond to conditions caused by severe weather. The following guidelines should be followed during periods of severe weather.

### A. Cold Weather

Precautions must be taken, both outdoors and indoors, in extremely cold weather. The wind chill factor makes the body's internal temperature regulating mechanisms feel as though it is much colder than the thermometer indicates.

The Wind Chill Index should be used in making a decision. A lower limit of 20 degrees Fahrenheit (when adjusted for wind chill) is the guideline for outside work. Outdoor activities may be authorized at colder temperatures for short periods of time, but only after the following safety precautions have been taken.

Members should be:

- trained to recognize the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia
- properly clothed for the temperature – foul weather gear for rain and wool or synthetic fabrics for cold extremes
- assigned to work in pairs
- assigned outside for limited periods of time
- able to access a readily available warm-up location
- regularly monitored by Team Leaders and/or unit staff

### B. Hot Weather

Precautions must be taken, both outdoors and indoors, in extremely hot and humid weather. The Heat Index demonstrates how heat and humidity combine to create hazardous working conditions. Refer to the AmeriCorps NCCC Safety Guide for a Heat Index chart and additional information about service during extreme heat.

When working in hot weather, members will:

- have access to an adequate water supply
- wear SPF-15, at a minimum, sunscreen/block to protect themselves from sunburn (not only be necessary in hot weather conditions)
- undertake less physically strenuous work tasks
- take frequent breaks
- avoid working outdoors at mid-day
- be monitored frequently
- trained to recognize and be alert to symptoms of heat exhaustion and dehydration

### C. All Inclement Weather Conditions

On days when there are thunderstorms, freezing rain, heavy precipitation, or poor air quality, region staff should rely on information available from local sources, such as law enforcement, highway department offices, weather bureau, and the radio, to determine whether teams should report to project sites, or, if already at a project site, whether they should end work early to avoid unsafe travel conditions. Teams required to work in inclement weather must also check the above referenced sources of weather information to ensure that working outdoors is safe. Whenever thunder is audible or lightning is visible, teams may not work outside.

## D. Responsibility of the Team Leader

Subject to direction from the supervisor, the Team Leader, not the project sponsor, is responsible for determining whether or not a team will engage in service activities during inclement weather. The Team Leader should inform the Unit Leader of any weather-related service activity changes as soon as reasonably possible.

## Spike Sites

A “spike” occurs when a team undertakes a service project that requires an overnight stay away from the campus facility for one or more nights.

### A. General

#### 1. Length of Spikes

Spikes vary in length based on the needs of community partners and project sponsors. A single project round may be comprised of multiple spikes. Typically NCCC teams are not deployed continuously without a transition for a duration longer than 15 weeks. Region Directors may approve longer durations. Transitions may occur either virtually or in-person on campus. Multi-day, long distance travel across country is discouraged for safety reasons.

#### 2. Support Services

Support services for members will be, to the extent practicable, commensurate with campus support services and will be assured for the life of the project.

### B. Supervision & Accountability

All spike projects will be team-based. The following rules will apply to all teams on spike.

#### 1. Team Leader Responsibilities

The Team Leader is in charge of the team from the time of departure until return and is responsible for the safety and well-being of the team. However, any unit staff member or project staff member may direct changes affecting the safety and well-being of the team, or the accomplishments of project objectives.

#### 2. Delegation of Responsibilities

At the beginning of each day, the Team Leader will appoint one Corps member to assume responsibility for the safety and well-being of the team in the event that a Team Leader becomes incapacitated. If such a situation arises, the appropriate Unit Leader must be notified immediately.

#### 3. Spike Housing

The housing facility and boundaries designated by the Team Leader, with Unit Leader approval, will be known as the spike housing. All rules specific to the regional campus will be enforced in this area. This includes no overnight guests, with the limited

exception of personnel affiliated with AmeriCorps NCCC or the project sponsor.

If a team is staying at spike housing that has hosted previous teams, then the previous spike boundaries will apply. This information should be communicated prior to the team’s arrival at the spike housing site. If the spike housing site is a new project, the team will assign boundaries upon arrival at the site and make those boundaries clear to the team immediately. This will be accomplished in consultation with the Unit Leader. If a team has a team charter, the spike boundaries should be included in the charter.

When multiple teams are at a project site and share the same living arrangement, Unit Leaders will solicit recommendations on what the spike housing boundaries should be from the Team Leaders. If teams from other campuses arrive within 72 hours thereafter, the Unit Leaders will coordinate to establish common boundaries. This will occur within 72 hours of the first team arriving, or within 24 hours of the arrival of the final team expected to be housed at that particular site, whichever is shorter. Unit Leaders for the multiple teams are responsible for approving proposed boundaries.

Once a spike housing boundary is established and approved by the Unit Leader, it will remain in place for the time period where AmeriCorps NCCC continuously occupies the housing site and may only be adjusted if there is a compelling safety or programmatic interest to do so.

Members of the NCCC Forest Corps program will work primarily within National Forests or National Grasslands. This could include difficult living situations, including camping and working in primitive locations. This also may include challenging terrain, lack of connectivity, and primitive living, potentially at higher elevations.

#### 4. Code of Conduct

The AmeriCorps NCCC Code of Conduct will be enforced at all times during the spike, including free time both on and off the spike site.

#### 5. Host Facilities Rules

To the extent reasonably possible, AmeriCorps NCCC teams will conform with rules specific to the host facility.

#### 6. Additional Rules

The Team Leader may establish additional rules for the spike that are reasonable to ensure the health, safety, and morale of the team, as necessary.



## 7. Leaving Spike Housing

No one may enter (i.e., friends, visitors), nor may Corps members leave the spike housing without first notifying the Team Leader. Corps members who wish to leave the spike area should do so in groups of two or more. Those leaving should, whenever possible, inform the Team Leader as to the destination and expected time of return. Once back in the spike housing area, Corps members should check in with the Team Leader or designated Corps member if the Team Leader is offsite.

### C. Team Leader Responsibilities

While a team is out on spike, the Team Leader is required to:

- maintain a list of emergency contact phone numbers for AmeriCorps NCCC personnel
- locate the emergency medical facility upon arrival and familiarize the team on how to get there in case of an emergency
- maintain a supply of Worker's Compensation forms and other related injury and accident forms
- provide main AmeriCorps NCCC staff and the project sponsor with a telephone number where the team can be reached

- in consultation with the Unit Leader, assign boundaries to the spike lodging upon arrival and make those boundaries clear to the team
- ensure that members and visitors are aware of spike lodging rules
- check in with team's assigned Unit Leader at the campus regularly and provide a status report
- prepare and submit Project Status and Accountability Reports (Weekly Progress Report) to the Unit Leader at least once a week, which will be forwarded to the Region Director
- ensure no member consumes alcohol at the spike lodging or project work site at any time
- maintain a general awareness of the location of all members at all times and a general awareness of all events and occurrences at and around spike housing

### D. Sanctions

Any violation of spike rules may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal.





## Medical Assessment and Accommodation Standards

To successfully serve as a NCCC service member, candidates must be able to do or perform the following medical assessment and accommodation standards (MAAS):

1. AmeriCorps NCCC members must be able to self-manage their day-to-day activities and basic self-care with or without assistive devices or approved accommodations.
2. AmeriCorps NCCC Members must be able to manage their medical and mental healthcare needs independently with or without approved accommodations. This includes management of day-to-day medical and mental health needs, recognizing when professional assistance is needed, and accessing this care through private, public, or NCCC-provided resources.
3. AmeriCorps NCCC members must be able to receive and follow instructions to complete program tasks. NCCC members who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have other conditions that interfere with written and oral communication may require modifications to ensure communication access with or without approved accommodations.
4. AmeriCorps NCCC members must manage their emotions constructively and in a way that is not disruptive to others or impedes other members' ability to pursue and accomplish the NCCC mission.
5. AmeriCorps NCCC members must be able to meet the physical demands of the program, with or without a Reasonable Accommodation. Members who have a medical condition, such as a seizure disorder or limited mobility that would make it unsafe or impossible for them to perform specific tasks may necessitate consideration of a modification to their work assignment.
6. AmeriCorps NCCC projects may be in areas of high elevation and environments where air quality is a concern. Some projects may require working outdoors in inclement weather or working from heights, such as on a rooftop or near a mountain ledge. Projects may have limited lodging options that require members to camp or sleep on a floor at a lodging site.

7. AmeriCorps NCCC is a team-based close-quarters program that affords members limited privacy. Members must be able to work collaboratively in this environment, which includes ongoing consideration of team needs and values and the program's mission. Members must also be able to express their needs constructively, support the needs of others, compromise, and participate in effective conflict resolution and problem-solving.

8. Participants in AmeriCorps NCCC must comply with the rules and regulations outlined in the NCCC Member handbook and code of conduct, including those related to substance use. The possession, use, or distribution of (federally) illegal drugs, or the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication, is strictly prohibited. Alcohol use during service and training hours, or in project/campus housing, is prohibited, and alcohol use by individuals under the age of 21 is prohibited at any time during the service term.



# ADMINISTRATION

## Service Hours Policy

### A. Direct Service

#### 1. Service Requirement

In order to qualify for a full education award, members must (1) complete a minimum of 1,700 hours of service, and (2) successfully complete the program. In general, eligible service activities are those service activities that directly relate to a program's community service projects. Key criteria are outlined below—including, but not limited to work plans and inclement weather plans .

"Service" is community service that is a direct benefit to the community where it is performed (not including the AmeriCorps NCCC community). This includes both team service projects and individual service hours, as approved. Part of the service hours can be activities incidental to performing service (such as travel to and from the worksite, project preparation and research, project portfolio completion, and project debrief). Not more than 10 percent of a member's service hours may be credited for this activity.

#### 2. Prohibited Activities

AmeriCorps NCCC members while in uniform, while on duty, while representing AmeriCorps NCCC, or while using AmeriCorps NCCC resources may not engage in any of 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 Federal office or the outcome of an election to a State or local 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 proselytization.
- h. Providing a direct benefit to any— (A) business organized for profit; (B) labor union; (C) partisan political organization; (D) nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, except that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at the member's own initiative; and (E) organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g), unless the position is not used to support those religious activities;
- i. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.
- j. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps resources to conduct a voter registration drive.

#### 3. Duties Not Considered Service

- Duties that support the operation of the AmeriCorps NCCC campus, e.g., shopping, cleaning dorms, and night-watch duty.
- Member involvement in committees and governance with the AmeriCorps NCCC community. While this fosters citizenship and contributes to the overall health of the AmeriCorps NCCC community, it does not fall within the intent of the legislation, which is, in part, to have service impact communities other than its own.



	MINIMUM NUMBER OF ISP HOURS THAT MUST BE COMPLETED TO GRADUATE		MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ISP HOURS THAT CAN BE COMPLETED TO GRADUATE	
	CORPS MEMBER	TEAM LEADER	CORPS MEMBER	TEAM LEADER
<b>TRADITIONAL CORPS</b>	80	NO MINIMUM ISP HOURS	NO UPPER LIMIT	NO UPPER LIMIT
<b>FEMA CORPS</b>	10	NO MINIMUM ISP HOURS	80*	40
<b>FOREST CORPS</b>	10	NO MINIMUM ISP HOURS	NO UPPER LIMIT	NO UPPER LIMIT

## B. Independent Service Project Hours

All AmeriCorps NCCC members must earn a portion of the 1,700 hour requirement through Independent Service Project (ISP) hours. ISPs are different from the day to day team-based service. They are intended to allow Corps members to serve on issue areas in which they have an individual interest, to afford them a broader variety of service experiences than what they accomplish as a team, and to give them an understanding of how they may continue to serve beyond the team-based experience.

Of the 1,700 service hours required for program completion, a certain number must be ISPs, as shown in the chart above.

ISP requests must be submitted to the designated NCCC staff approver no later than three business days prior to the start of the ISP. ISPs must be approved by the designated NCCC staff approver and must be performed so as not to interfere with regular, team-based projects - mostly during evenings and weekends. Members may discuss ISP's that are not approved with the designated NCCC staff approver or Unit Leader for further clarification. These decisions have no appeal process. Corps members who fail to achieve the required hours of ISP service may be subject to having the member's education awards withheld or pro-rated.

All ISP's will have a member designated as a point of contact to the hosting organization. The designated point of contact will take a coordinating role to contact the sponsoring organization, recruit other members, arrange logistics, communicate cancellations, etc. If a member does not attend or find a replacement and does not have a legitimate

reason for withdrawing then the member may be subject to disciplinary actions. Members are responsible for all documentation associated with the ISP. This includes paperwork as well as keeping track of the hours served on the ISP. The point of contact/lead member is required to complete and return the ISP documentation and completion reports to the Unit Leader or the designee via the Team Leader as soon as possible but not more than 90 days following the completion of the ISP.

Team Leaders are exempt from ISP requirements although they are encouraged to participate. If a Team Leader chooses to perform ISP hours, the Team Leader will be held to the same requirements as Corps members regarding types of projects, professional conduct, deadlines for submission, as well as transportation-, uniform-, and alcohol-guidelines.

Any ISP hours above the minimum hours requirement for TRAD, and the maximum hours allowed for FEMA Corps, may be applied towards the Presidential Volunteer Service awards (PVSA). \*For FEMA Corps, while hours above 80 will be counted towards the PVSA for Corps members, they cannot be counted towards a member's service requirements to graduate. For example, if a FEMA Corps CM completes 100 ISP hours, 80 of those hours would count towards graduation and 20 of those hours would count towards the PVSA. If a FEMA Corps Team Leader completes 100 ISP hours, 40 of those hours would count towards graduation and 60 hours would count towards the PVSA. Contact campus staff for more information on the PVSA.

Initial orientation and training is provided within the first month of a member's class year. While conducting ISPs, members are covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act and the Federal Employees Compensation Act. All relevant AmeriCorps NCCC rules, guidelines, and SOPs will be followed. With approval, members may complete ISP's during their breaks either in their hometown or local community.

All members (Traditional, FEMA Corps, and Forest Corps) will wear the full Traditional uniform while performing ISP. FEMA Corps members cannot wear FEMA Corps uniforms while performing ISPs.

FEMA Corps members will not be given time off during a FEMA service project to arrange for or serve on an ISP. ISP hours will be performed by individual FEMA Corps members outside the Team assignment, mostly during days off, evenings, and weekends. All ISPs must be approved by AmeriCorps staff.

## Service-Learning & Member Development

AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens communities and develops leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. Therefore, a solid educational program that complements the work projects and overall campus life is a critical element of AmeriCorps NCCC's success. All training, service learning, and member development is included as part of AmeriCorps NCCC's Service Leadership Program. Currently, service-learning and member development involve several components, including:

### A. In-Processing & Orientation

In-processing and orientation generally occurs during the first week of both Team Leader Training (TLT) and the Corps Training Institute (CTI). Some of the items covered during this period include member benefits, uniform distribution, campus orientation, and ID badges.

### B. Team Leader Training (TLT)

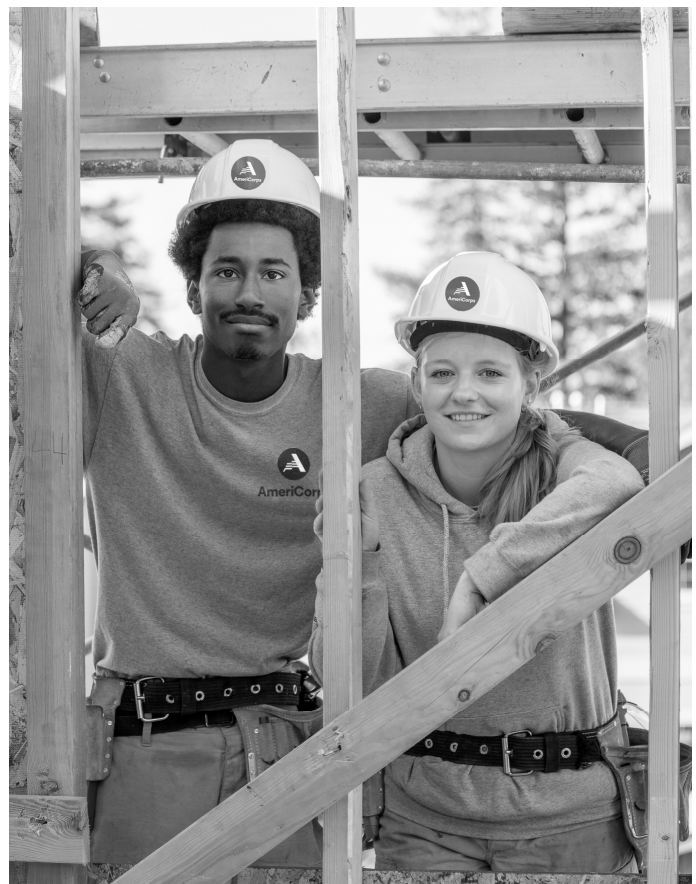
Team Leader Training (TLT) occurs during the first several weeks after Team Leaders arrive and is coordinated by AmeriCorps NCCC staff, in partnership with implementing organizations (i.e. FEMA and USFS), where appropriate. Training is based on national training competencies and includes sessions on supervisory skills, diversity awareness, project preparation and management, policies and procedures, and management and administration. Full participation in is required and essential for Team Leaders to be prepared to manage a team.

### C. Corps Member Training Institute (CTI)

CTI is conducted during Corps members' first several weeks on campus and is coordinated by NCCC staff. It is implemented with the full participation of NCCC staff. CTI is an intensive program designed to develop the AmeriCorps NCCC campus community. Full participation in CTI is expected and essential for Corps members to be prepared for service throughout the AmeriCorps NCCC year. For FEMA Corps and Forest Corps, additional training modules are offered that cover FEMA or USFS specific topics.

### D. Service Training & Preparation

AmeriCorps NCCC recognizes that quality community service has many components. Among these components is the cycle of learning where good preparation and training precedes the service project and thorough evaluation and reflection occurs throughout and after completion of the project. The AmeriCorps NCCC staff work in collaboration with the sponsoring agencies to ensure that required project-related training is provided to the team prior to or upon arrival on-site. Preparation can include use of equipment and safety procedures as appropriate and background information about community or natural environment of the project site.



## E. Service Learning

Members will be expected to learn from each other and the communities they are serving throughout the year and to reflect together about experiences on project sites. This is done through the incorporation of the PARC Service-Learning Model – Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Celebration. This kind of service-learning is facilitated through the following activities:

- **Preparation** for each project by conducting research on the social issue being addressed and the community where the project will be conducted. Part of preparation includes identifying service-learning activities that will be conducted on-site.
- **Action**, which refers to the actual service project activities.
- **Reflection** on the service activities, skills developed, and community impact. Each team assembles a service-learning project portfolio. The project portfolio records the service-learning project experiences, challenges, and accomplishments; and is used for reflection, documentation, and presentation purposes. The completed portfolio can be used by members as background for resumes, job seeking, or educational applications. Finally, AmeriCorps NCCC staff members can use the finished service-learning project portfolio as documentation of members' activities—a tangible account of program achievements.
- **Celebration** includes project recognition efforts and achievements and is usually done through project debriefs.

## F. Personal & Professional Development

AmeriCorps NCCC is committed to enhancing the skills and education of all members. AmeriCorps NCCC will provide resources, strategies, and opportunities for individuals to make decisions and plans for the member's future following AmeriCorps NCCC, including the following:

- Members may complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), identifying goals and skills to be developed over the course of the year.
- Members will be encouraged to work on the goals/skills identified in the member's ILP through community service, mini-courses, and other resources with support from training and service-learning staff and in the community where they serve.
- Members will be encouraged to obtain a high school diploma or GED if they have not already done so.

- Members will have the opportunity to pursue a Certificate in Non-Profit Management, and both the Presidential and Congressional Awards for service. Academic integrity will be strictly adhered to for all course and certificate requirements.

## G. Other Activities

In order to provide a community environment that promotes the whole person concept, a number of campus traditions will be developed. A variety of optional Structured Leisure Activities (SLA), such as Affinity Groups, may be coordinated by the AmeriCorps NCCC staff in cooperation with members.

## Member Grievance Procedures

These grievance procedures shall be used when a member believes that the member's ability to participate in, or receive the full benefits of, the program has been diminished because of disagreements with other members or staff personnel. This includes, but is not limited to, disagreements concerning service credit and amounts of education awards due at the termination of the individual's participation in the program.

The procedures shall not be used in the following circumstances:

- to raise allegations of discrimination or disparate (unfair) treatment based upon discrimination. Equal Opportunity procedures are available for these types of complaints as outlined in the Rights and Responsibilities section of this handbook
- to complain about AmeriCorps NCCC policies, operations, physical living conditions, size or locations of living quarters, or other similar matters. These types of concerns should be brought to the attention of the AmeriCorps NCCC staff through normal channels established for these purposes
- to challenge a proposal or decision by the AmeriCorps NCCC staff to transfer, terminate, suspend, or otherwise discipline a member for conduct that, in the opinion of the Region Director, jeopardizes the enforcement of the standards of conduct established by AmeriCorps NCCC, or that may diminish the opportunities of other individuals. Additionally, these grievance procedures will not be used to appeal a disciplinary action



## A. Grievances against Fellow Members

### 1. Conflict Resolution

If a Corps member has a grievance against another AmeriCorps NCCC Corps member, or a Team Leader has a grievance against another AmeriCorps NCCC Team Leader, the member should first try to resolve the matter by requesting a meeting with the other member and the appropriate Team Leader(s), or Unit Leader(s) within three duty days following the incident. If previous attempts to resolve the matter by the parties have resulted in an impasse, the time limit shall begin to run from the day of the impasse. The time limit may be waived by the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership for good cause.

### 2. Written Complaint

If the face-to-face meeting does not resolve the matter, the aggrieved member may submit a written complaint through the member's Team Leader, if applicable, to the Unit Leader. The written complaint should include at a minimum the date and time of the incident, the names of the parties involved, witnesses to the incident, and a short statement as to how the member thinks the grievance should be resolved. The written complaint should be endorsed by the Team Leader with a recommendation, if applicable, and be presented to the grieving party's Unit Leader within three duty days from receipt.

### 3. Unit Leader & Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership

The Unit Leader will then attempt to resolve the complaint with the concerned parties. This shall take place within three duty days from receipt of the written complaint. If the matter cannot be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, the Unit Leader will submit the matter within three duty days (with recommendations) to the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership for a decision.

The Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership's decision will be made within five duty days and transmitted to the grieving party within five duty days from the date of the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership's decision.

### 4. Appeal of Decision

If the member chooses to appeal the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership's decision, he or she may do so to the Region Director. The decision of the Region Director will be final and binding on all parties. There is no appeal of the Region Director's decision. Failure to comply with this decision may also be the basis for disciplinary action (including dismissal from AmeriCorps NCCC) against the offending party.

## B. Grievances against Staff

### 1. Conflict Resolution

If a Corps member has a grievance against a Team Leader or staff member, the member should attempt to resolve the matter by meeting with the individual within three duty days following the incident. This also applies to Team Leaders who have complaints concerning AmeriCorps NCCC staff. If the complaint concerns a service issue or assignment, the individual will comply with the staff member's instructions and then attempt to schedule a meeting with the staff member in order to resolve the conflict. If the staff member does not meet with the individual within three duty days or at the time mutually agreed upon by both parties, or if the meeting fails to produce an acceptable resolution to the grievance, the individual may submit a written complaint to the staff member's immediate supervisor. The complaint should specifically describe the circumstances surrounding the complaint and the names of individuals who may have information surrounding the incident.

Finally, the complaint should contain a short statement as to how the member thinks the grievance should be resolved. The written complaint should be endorsed by the supervisor of the grieving party (with a recommendation) and be presented to the Region Director within three duty days from receipt.

### 2. Region Director

The Region Director will then attempt to resolve the complaint with the concerned parties. This shall take place within 10 duty days from receipt of the written complaint. The Region Director will make the final decision concerning the complaint and transmit this decision in writing within five duty days from the date that the final decision is made by the Region Director.

### 3. Appeal of Decision

The decision of the Region Director is final and binding on all parties except for those grievances that concern service hour credit and/or education award determinations. In these situations, a member may appeal the Region Director's decision to the National Director, who will give the individual an opportunity to submit matters on their behalf. Depending on the circumstances, an objective fact-finder may be appointed to ascertain the facts and make a recommendation to the AmeriCorps NCCC National Director, who will make the final decision concerning the grievance.

For all other grievances, there is no appeal of the Region Director's decision. Failure to comply with this decision may be the basis for disciplinary action (including dismissal from AmeriCorps NCCC) against the offending party. Nothing in these procedures either mandates or precludes AmeriCorps NCCC from taking official disciplinary action against government employees who are involved in duty-related misconduct.

## Physical & Mental Health

### A. Health History

To be eligible to serve in AmeriCorps NCCC, the applicant must be free of any health condition (medical, mental, or emotional) that:

- represents a current and direct threat to other members of AmeriCorps NCCC or to the applicant
- precludes participation in the AmeriCorps NCCC program with a reasonable expectation of successful completion
- requires prolonged inpatient medical care or special medical attention that AmeriCorps NCCC cannot reasonably accommodate

### B. Definition of "Direct Threat"

"Direct threat" means a significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation. The determination that an individual poses a "direct threat" shall be based on an individualized assessment of the individual's present ability to safely perform the essential functions of the service. This assessment shall be based on reasonable medical judgment that relies on the most current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence. In determining whether an individual would pose a direct threat, the factors to be considered include:

- the duration of the risk
- the nature and severity of the potential harm
- the likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk

All decisions as to whether an individual poses a direct threat are made by the Region Director.

## C. Medical Incapacitation

If a member is incapacitated for a period of less than 10 days as a result of illness, injury, or other health concern, the member will be allowed to remain on campus, if reasonable accommodation can be made. All allowances and stipends will continue. However, no service hours will be earned during this period.

## D. Medical Hold

If a member is unable to train or serve for a period of greater than 2 to no more than 30 days due to an injury, illness, or other health condition, the member may be placed on Medical Hold. The member is encouraged to provide documentation from a licensed provider regarding the medical condition, prognosis, recuperation time, and duty limitations. The decision to place the individual on medical hold will be made by the Region Director based on information provided by the individual's licensed provider.

The member will be informed in writing of the effective date of placement into medical hold. If determined by the Region Director that the member must be placed on medical hold, NCCC will provide transportation to the approved medical hold location (usually the HOR) of the member. If the Region Director determines that the member may return to active service, following a medical hold, NCCC will provide return transportation from the approved medical hold location as determined by the Region Director.

During a medical hold, a member's living allowance will continue; however, service hours will not be earned. An individual who has been, or who is, on medical hold at the completion of the program, will graduate with the rest of the class.

## E. Exiting AmeriCorps NCCC for Medical Reasons

If the member is unable to resume service within 30 days after being placed on medical hold, the member may, at the discretion of the Region Director, be exited for medical reasons. However, if a Region Director decides to keep a member on medical hold after the member has been in that status for a 30-day period, the living allowance will not be paid for any time after the 30 days have elapsed. The living allowance will resume when, and if, the member is reinstated. The member's Unit Leader should notify the member through a written letter signed by the Region Director that the member will not receive a living allowance after the 30 days of medical-hold have elapsed.

The decision to exit an individual for medical reasons will be made by the Region Director on the basis of information received from the individual's licensed provider or other medical consultation obtained by AmeriCorps NCCC. Written notice of intent to exit the member from the program must precede the date on which the individual is proposed to be medically exited. If a member receives a medical exit, health benefits will be paid through the effective exit date. Education awards may be pro-rated in accordance with AmeriCorps NCCC policy.

An individual may appeal the medical exit decision on the basis of disagreement with the anticipated time of recovery from the illness or injury. If an individual chooses to appeal, the member must submit a written appeal, with supporting documentation, within 15 days of receipt of the written notice to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC, 250 E St SW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20525.

The Office of the Director of AmeriCorps NCCC will review all information submitted and may request additional medical information from the licensed provider. After review of all pertinent medical documentation, the National Director will render a final decision on the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the individual will be reinstated into AmeriCorps NCCC service retroactive to the date of exit.

## F. Medical Readmittance

If a former member wishes to re-enter service following medical dismissal, the former member should submit a written request to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC along with a statement from the licensed provider that the individual is fit to return to service. AmeriCorps NCCC may seek additional medical consultation in such

cases, as necessary. The National Director may admit the individual to the next class provided the individual meets the age restrictions, will not have completed more than two terms of service upon the new dismissal date, and is deemed to be physically and mentally able to participate with or without reasonable accommodation.

## G. Reassignment

If a NCCC Forest Corps Team Leader or member is unable to meet the minimum qualifications for the Work Capacity Test, or other labor-intensive work or training requirements unique to Forest Corps, they may be given the opportunity to transfer to a concurrently running NCCC Traditional program in a different NCCC region.



# THIS YEAR AND BEYOND

The AmeriCorps NCCC experience is only part of a lifetime of service. Graduates may commit to another term as an AmeriCorps member, pursue service opportunities with local organizations, or even plan and execute the member's own service projects in the member's communities. Regardless of the path they choose, AmeriCorps NCCC graduates have a unique opportunity to transform the member's communities and shape the future of America.

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Don't forget to update your contact information in the My AmeriCorps Portal. In addition, please sign up for AmeriCorps Alums. By becoming a member of AmeriCorps Alums you will have access to the NCCC group pages. On these pages you will be able to access contact information for fellow AmeriCorps members, have the ability to post messages, and chat with other alums about other great benefits of being a part of the AmeriCorps Alums community. Join at [AmeriCorpsalums.org](http://AmeriCorpsalums.org).



## Member Liability for Government Property

Members will be financially responsible for government and sponsor property under the member's control that is either damaged or lost as a result of gross negligence or a deliberate willful destruction of the property. Gross negligence is defined as the intentional failure to perform a duty in reckless disregard of the consequences, which directly affects the property of another.

When a Region Director makes a preliminary determination that government property was either lost or damaged as a result of gross negligence or deliberate destruction, the member will be presented a Statement of Charges, which will include a description of the property, the replacement value of the property, a short narrative stating how the property was either lost or damaged, and a determination as to the member's pecuniary liability. The member will either sign the Statement of Charges, agreeing to pay for or replace the item, or disagree with the conclusion and, within five duty days, present a rebuttal statement, together with witness statements and other evidence in support of the rebuttal.

The Region Director will then appoint a staff member to conduct an informal investigation to determine the validity of the rebuttal statement. The investigating officer will present all the findings to the Region Director, who will make a final decision. The Region Director may impose either the replacement value or depreciated value (when appropriate), allow an acceptable replacement, or impose no liability at all in appropriate situations.

Appeals of the Region Director's decision must be submitted in writing to the AmeriCorps NCCC National Director within seven days of the Region Director's notification. The appeal should state the reasons for the appeal, and be accompanied by relevant witness statements and/or other documentation supporting the appeal. Once liability has finally been determined, the individual will be given a reasonable period to either replace or pay for the loss or damage (usually no more than one pay period). Deductions may not be made from the member's living allowance; however, failure to pay may be the basis for disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

Additionally, if a member owes money at the end of the program, a Region Director may take this into consideration in determining whether or not the member has successfully completed the program. Successful completion of the program is required to be eligible for the education award. Consequently, the award may be withheld until such time that the member satisfies the debt to the government.

## Federal Tort Claims Act

Under Title 42 U.S.C. Section 12620 (c), the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, members are federal employees for purposes of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). Under this act, the federal government assumes liability for any damage to property or injury to third persons caused by a federal employee that arises out of the employee's official duties and for which the individual would be liable under local law. It should be noted that contract employees are not government employees and consequently are not covered by the FTCA.

### A. Reporting a Claim

If any claim is made against an AmeriCorps NCCC participant or staff member with respect to an automobile accident or other damage (or in cases of potential liability for damage) to property or injury to persons, the individual should report such claims to the Unit Leader. The Unit Leader should then notify the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director. The Region Director must immediately notify the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC, who will consult with the AmeriCorps Office of General Counsel, who will then advise the AmeriCorps NCCC Region Director as to the steps that should be taken.

### B. Statement about Claims

Individuals should refrain from making any statements to other parties regarding accidents and the ultimate liability of the government on a particular claim. Such statements should only be made to government investigating officers. Depending on the amount of the claim in question, either the Office of General Counsel or the Department of Justice will make the final determination as to whether an accident occurred within the scope of the individual's service-related activities and the extent of the federal government's liability.

### C. Full Cooperation

Individuals are expected to give full cooperation to the Office of General Counsel in obtaining necessary evidence and materials and to the United States Attorney in the event any legal action is initiated in connection with an accident.

### D. Personal Liability

During off-duty hours, or in any situation in which AmeriCorps NCCC members are not engaged in service-related activities, they are as personally liable as any other citizen for any damage or injury they may cause.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Administrative Staff** - refers collectively to the Region Director, Deputy Region Directors, Unit Leaders, and other support personnel located in the administrative office.

**Affinity Groups** - A group of people with similar interests who assemble for mutual support, activities, and/or enjoyment.

**AmeriCorps** - the national service initiative that engages nearly 80,000 individuals in full- and part-time service through the AmeriCorps NCCC, VISTA, and State and National programs.

**AmeriCorps NCCC Members** - refers to all members and Team Leaders serving in AmeriCorps NCCC.

**Assistant Driver** - the person in the front passenger seat when someone is operating a vehicle. This individual assists the driver navigation and observes the driver for signs of fatigue. The person may also be referred to as "Safety."

**CTI** - Corps Member Training Institute. This is the training period between Corps member's change to "in-service" in the member portals and Induction; it is a time of preparation and readiness for the months of service ahead.

**Deputy Region Director for Operations** - the AmeriCorps staff member who reports to the Region Director and is responsible for regional budget development and execution, financial management policy compliance and implementation, procurement and contract support, accounting requirements, travel management, member debit cards, other financial management operations, the campus facility, equipment, and required regional logistics.

**Deputy Region Director for Programming** - the AmeriCorps NCCC staff member who reports to the Region Director and is responsible for development of project proposals, training, selection of projects, initial planning for work sites, and confirming project accomplishment.

**Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership** - the AmeriCorps NCCC staff member who reports to the Region Director and is responsible for project implementation, unit and team management, member discipline, and serving as the policy advisor to the Region Director on the member handbook.

**Financial Specialist** - the AmeriCorps staff member that supports the Deputy Region Director for Operations in regional budget development and execution, financial management policy compliance and implementation, procurement and contract support, accounting requirements, travel management, member debit cards, and other financial management operations.

**Headquarters** - the primary office of AmeriCorps located in Washington, DC.

**Headquarters Staff** - the AmeriCorps staff supporting centralized program and agency requirements,

generally working from the headquarters location in Washington, DC.

**ILP** - Individual Learning Plan. All members and Team Leaders, with staff assistance, are encouraged to develop and complete a learning plan.

**Member Support Specialist** - the AmeriCorps NCCC staff member responsible for managing the member Information System (MIS) in the My AmeriCorps Portal for all enrollment/ exit information, supporting the administration of all human resource actions affecting members, and coordinating travel arrangements for members.

**National Director** - The AmeriCorps staff member based in Headquarters responsible for oversight of the NCCC program.

**On-Site** - refers to activities conducted at a project site.

**POV** - Privately Owned Vehicles (i.e., member's personal vehicles).

**Region Director** - the administrative head of the AmeriCorps NCCC region, reporting directly to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC in Washington, D.C.

**Spikes** - A "spike" occurs when a team undertakes a service project that requires an overnight stay away from the campus facility for one or more nights. The majority of projects served by AmeriCorps members in the NCCC program are considered a spike project.

**Spike Housing** - the housing facility and boundaries designated by the Team Leader when teams are on a service project away from campus.

**Team** - the primary entity for each member. Every member is assigned to a team with an assigned Team Leader. Teams train, travel, and work together.

**Team Leader** - the immediate supervisor of members. Team leaders are responsible for the safety, well-being, productivity, and personal development of each member assigned to the team.

**TLT** - Team Leader Training. This is the training period between Team Leader arrival and Corps member arrival, during which Team Leaders are prepared to lead and support AmeriCorps NCCC teams.

**Unit** - usually five to seven teams compose one unit. At times, units will train for and travel to projects together. Much of the training during CTI will be accomplished within the unit structure.

**Unit Leader** - the AmeriCorps NCCC staff member responsible for the assigned members and the activities of the entire unit. The Unit Leader is involved in planning most of the details for work and how it is to be accomplished at individual project sites and is also the first-line supervisor of Team Leaders.

## **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!**

