



Frequently Asked Questions

AmeriCorps NCCC Forest Corps

• **What are the dates of the Forest Corps program?**

- Nov 1, 2024 – Feb 28, 2025: Team Leader application period
- Dec 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025: Corps Member application period
- March 31, 2025: Application Deadline for Forest Corps Members
- Feb 2025 – April 2025: Member Selection Notification
- Invitations to program will go out in two rounds, one in mid-February and the other at the end of April.
- May 20, 2025: Team Leaders Arrive
- May/June 2025: Team Leader Training in Sacramento, CA
- June 17, 2025: Corps Members Arrive
- June/July 2025: Corps Training Institute (CTI) in Sacramento, CA
- Mid-July – April 2026: Service Projects (could be anywhere nationwide)
- April 2026: Closure in Sacramento, CA
- April 2026: Graduation and Corps Members Depart
- April 2026: Team Leaders Depart

• **What are the general eligibility requirements for Forest Corps?**

- To serve as a Corps Member, you must be between 18-26 years old.
- To serve as a Team Leader, you must be 18 or older (no upper age limit). You may apply at age 17 if you will turn 18 before arriving on campus.
- Must be a U.S. Citizen.
- Must pass an initial drug screening test upon arrival to the program. A positive test on a drug screen for any substance (including marijuana) at any time during service could result in dismissal from the program.
- Team Leaders must have a valid driver's license, as they will be expected to drive the team vehicle, most often 4x4 vehicles.
- It is highly desired that Corps Members have valid driver's licenses, and NCCC will prioritize filling the class with applicants who have valid driver's licenses.
- Must be available for the duration of the Forest Corps commitment, willing to participate in full-time service consisting of extensive travel.
- **Must pass a job-related Work Capacity Test at the arduous level to meet minimum fitness qualifications. See below for details.**

PLEASE CAREFULLY WEIGH THESE CONDITIONS BEFORE APPLYING:

Forest Corps work is field based and rigorous. You must be prepared to handle hiking long distances while carrying a heavy pack, and navigating uneven terrain, carrying tools, and be able to complete trail work, surveys, prescribed fire burns, planting seedlings, and other labor-intensive outdoors projects. This may include hiking up and down mountainous terrain, at elevation, on and off formal trail systems.

[CLICK HERE to view Work Conditions in National Forests](#)

• **Is Forest Corps set up like the other NCCC programs?**

- For the most part, yes. Forest Corps is a new AmeriCorps NCCC partnership with the US Forest Service (USFS). Forest Corps participants will pursue the same NCCC mission of “strengthening communities and developing leaders through service.” As with all other NCCC programs, members will participate in pre-service training and serve on teams. NCCC teams will have USFS project sponsors, USFS site supervisors, and address a USFS and community-identified priority.

- Members will be subject to the policies of the NCCC Member Handbook 2025, including the Code of Conduct and content outlined in “AmeriCorps NCCC Policies”.
- The Handbook predates the establishment of Forest Corps, so there may be differences in how policy is applied for Forest Corps Members. Members will be made aware of such situations during the Corps Training Institute. Despite the overall similarities, there are differences and may evolve throughout the development of the program (see below).
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- Are the benefits to Members the same as other NCCC programs?
- For the most part, yes.
- The benefits made available in NCCC’s other programs are highlighted on our webpage. Forest Corps participants receive food, lodging, a modest living allowance, uniforms, and program-related travel expenses (including from your home of record to the training site, from there to your project, and home again after graduation), all of which are all covered by NCCC.
- All you need to provide is a positive attitude, teamwork, flexibility, and enthusiasm to serve!
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- What are the major differences between Forest Corps and Traditional and FEMA Corps?
- Differences in the Forest Corps program include but are not limited to the following:
- The pre-service training will be offered in coordination with the US Forest Service. Certain fire, forestry and grasslands-related certifications are available. As noted above, Forest Corps work is field based and rigorous. You must be prepared to handle hiking long distances while carrying a heavy pack, uneven terrain, carrying tools, and be able to complete trail work, surveys, prescribed fire burns, planting seedlings, and other labor-intensive outdoors projects. This may include hiking up and down mountainous terrain, at elevation, on and off formal trail systems. Please carefully weigh these considerations before applying.

- Forest Corps members will receive additional food and living allowance due to the rigorous nature of the work. The member compensation package for Forest Corps members, includes all transportation, lodging, clothing, food, living allowance, a health benefit and more.
- Like other NCCC programs, Forest Corps experiences will help you grow professionally, and you will develop leadership skills and support to create your own professional resume by the end of the program. The US Forest Service is actively seeking graduates of the ten-month NCCC Forest Corps program for federal entry-level positions with their agency, as those jobs are available. NCCC works to assist members with their life after AmeriCorps plans throughout their term of service. This can include assistance with a variety of resume styles, connecting members with professionals, assisting with educational opportunities, and much more! NCCC staff will guide and connect you with the right people within US Forest Service if you are interested in this career path, as well as with additional organizations within land management and conservation, if you have the interest in pursuing a career after your term of service.
- Independent Service Projects (ISPs) are service activities performed by a member in addition to your Team-assigned U.S. Forest Service project, conducted with community or faith-based organizations, local or national non-profits, schools, local, state or regional municipalities, parks, and/or Native American tribes. Time spent performing ISPs will be reduced to 10 hours for Forest Corps members and members will not be given time off during a U.S. Forest Service project to arrange for or serve on an ISP. Similarly, “specialty roles” for members will have a more limited role in Forest Corps to maintain the focus and commitment to the US Forest Service.

- Other differences may arise as the program is further developed and will be communicated during Corps Training Institute.

• **Is there a pre-service health screening process for NCCC Forest Corps?**

- NCCC collects health information from candidates by using the NCCC Health Assessment Survey (HAS).

NCCC Health Services Unit will send the Health Assessment Survey to candidates who have been sent a conditional offer to join NCCC Forest Corps. All candidates must complete and submit the survey along with required immunization information.

- In some instances, a candidate may have complex, persistent or recurring medical, mental health or other needs that interfere with the ability to meet the NCCC Forest Corps expectations, even with accommodation. Health Services Unit staff will work with each candidate individually to identify potential barriers to successful service and possible reasonable accommodations or other program options that may be more suitable.
- Self-Certification: Additionally, NCCC will request that you review, sign and return an online form called “Self-Certification” that confirms that you understand the physical challenges inherent to NCCC Forest Corps service, that you have discussed any heart, lung, or seizure-related health issue that might impact your NCCC Forest Corps service with a health professional, have made an informed decision about whether Forest Corps is right for you, and that you will provide substantiating evidence of the health professional’s visit if you are asked.

• **Is there a fitness test for NCCC Forest Corps?**

- Yes!
- Wildland field work demands a high level of fitness to safely perform arduous, day-long work in difficult environmental conditions, including steep terrain, extreme temperatures, altitude, and smoke, and to meet unforeseen emergencies. When prolonged hard work is involved, fitness is the most important factor in work capacity.
- Work capacity is a composite of fitness, acclimatization, nutrition, skill, experience, and motivation. Fitness is the most important factor. Fitness has two components, aerobic and muscular strength.
- AmeriCorps NCCC, applying the guidance and standards of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, will administer a Work Capacity Test (WCT) shortly after you arrive to Sacramento. Please review information from the US Forest Service to help you prepare for the Work Capacity Test, [click here](#). Also, please see [Fitness and Work Capacity: 2009 Edition \(usda.gov\)](#).

- NCCC Forest Corps requires passing a job-related Work Capacity Test to meet minimum qualifications. Such tests help ensure that NCCC members have the minimum capacity to perform work without undue fatigue and without becoming a hazard to themselves or other workers.
 - You must meet minimum levels of fitness requirements for the type of duties to be assigned as a NCCC Forest Corps member.
 - There is one test that is required for all Members to serve with Forest Corps: the Arduous Work Capacity Test, which is a 3-mile hike carrying a 45-pound pack in 45 min. This test is strictly administered and will be in compliance with the National Wildland Coordinating Group standards. This level of the test is required to receive the certifications necessary to meet the minimum qualifications for the work of the program.
 - An EMT will be on site during the Arduous Work Capacity Test day.
- **What happens if I don't pass the Work Capacity Test?**
 - If you do not pass the Arduous Pack Test in Sacramento, NCCC will make another program available to you.
 - As soon as feasible, members who did not pass the WCT will be offered a transfer to the NCCC traditional program at our Southern Region campus in Vicksburg, MS. Members will have the option to accept this offer or will return to their home of record. Although Southern Region does manage specialty teams that work with US Forest Service, all members serving with US Forest Service must pass the Arduous Work Capacity Test to participate on those teams, also.
 - There is no guarantee that any member who transfers from Sacramento to Vicksburg will be re-tested in Vicksburg or assigned to a Specialty Team to work with US Forest Service.
 - **When I do pass the test, what will I do as a NCCC Forest Corps member?**
 - NCCC Forest Corps teams will work on the following activities:
 - Wildfire Risk Mitigation: Projects focus on planning, implementing, and monitoring hazardous fuels reduction with the goal of mitigating wildfire risk to communities, restoring fire resilient landscapes and ecosystems, and/or protecting threatened and endangered species habitats.

- Wildfire Risk Mitigation cont.: Activities may include, but are not limited to, burn preparation, prescribed burning, and fire effects monitoring.
- Reforestation: Projects support reforestation and stand improvement activities on lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and/or provide training for nursery work and forestry careers. Activities may include seed and cone collection or processing; nursery services to support growing seedlings and seed stock for formally managed orchards, reforestation needs assessments, planning, implementation, and monitoring/survival rates of trees; stand improvement and site preparation for natural regeneration; tree improvement area maintenance, measurements, data collection, and capacity.
- Resource Management: Projects support recreation management (infrastructure and trail maintenance), timber marking, vegetation management, ecosystem management, wildlife surveys, wetland restoration, boundary line/land line maintenance and marking, geographic information systems (GIS) mapping, resource monitoring, and conservation education.
- Wildfire Suppression Incident Response: When needed, teams comprised of members who have successfully passed the Work Capacity Test and has received other USFS certifications by the Forest Service, may be mobilized for USFS-determined disaster response and recovery efforts.

• **What will training be like?**

- On arrival day, NCCC staff will meet incoming members at the airport and help them get settled on campus. During in-processing, members will receive their room assignment, a Sacramento NCCC campus tour, and their uniform. Training sessions, conducted by NCCC staff in coordination with US Forest Service staff, will prepare members to serve safely, effectively, and collaboratively with their teammates. Throughout your training period, you will be required to completed physical training 5 days per week to prepare you for the rigors of the work.

- **Do we get to choose our project, and how will we get there?**

- Projects are developed and selected by US Forest Service staff, in close coordination with NCCC staff, and will be assigned to teams in a way that most effectively meets the needs of the US Forest Service sponsors. Teams are assigned to projects, not individuals, and therefore every Member of Forest Corps must be prepared to work in all project areas covered by the partnership, to include the possibility of wildfire suppression, as described above. After training is complete, all teams will deploy to their projects in NCCC vehicles. Teams are typically 7-9 members but can vary in size. The length of your team's road trip will vary depending upon the location of your assigned project. If your drive will take more than one day, modest hotel accommodations will be planned and provided by NCCC. Come ready with playlists, travel games, and get-to-know-you questions for your teammates!

- **Where will we live when we get to our project?**

- Upon arrival at your project site, your team will move into the lodging provided by the US Forest Service sponsor hosting your team. Accommodations can vary significantly, from a shared house or cabin to modest US Forest Service bunk housing, to camping. Housing for the team will include sleeping quarters, kitchen access, bathroom/showers, and cleaning supplies. The exception to this would be for projects that require short term camping, in which all basic supplies will be provided to you. There may be limited or no WiFi and cell phone service at the housing location. All teams will be provided with long-distance radios connected to Forest Service networks for emergency and communication purposes.
- Your team will work together to shop for groceries using your team's food budget and will share cooking and cleaning duties. Any necessary tools or supplies will be provided by NCCC or your Forest Service host unit. Come to NCCC ready for adventure, and an amazing experience will be waiting for you!

- **What if I've never done anything like this before?**

- Forest Corps project sponsors will be ready to train your team how to do critical work tasks, as well as why those tasks are important to their National Forest or Grassland, their organization and the community.

No prior training is necessary! Be prepared to try new things, learn from your Forest Service supervisors and teammates, and gain new skills and experiences while serving.

- **Will I get any days off?**

- Your project schedule will be determined by the sponsoring organization. Many projects will operate on a typical full-time, Monday-Friday schedule or a Monday-Thursday “4 10’s”. There are often exceptions and you must expect to not know your specific schedule until you are assigned to each project. Serving in a hot climate? Your project may start early in the day and end early or build in a break during the heat of the day, to maximize your team’s safety and wellbeing. Serving with an organization that needs support on the weekend? You may work a Tuesday-Saturday schedule.
- In a few cases, you may be deployed to an active fire response and could be required to serve longer days with fewer days off while helping to meet urgent needs in that situation.
- Members are permitted to take sick days if they aren’t feeling well and can be granted emergency leave on an as-needed basis. Participants will receive time off for federal holidays.

- **For those who have served previously in NCCC, are we eligible to participate in Forest Corps?**

- In many cases, yes!
- Eligibility requirements for participation are addressed with the typical restrictions in place for serving in consecutive AmeriCorps NCCC terms, regardless of whether those terms are Traditional Corps, FEMA Corps, Summer of Service, or Forest Corps. Due to legislative restrictions, if you have served consecutive terms in both Class 29 and Class 30 in any NCCC program, you would not be eligible to serve in Forest Corps, which is considered part of Class 31.

- **Can currently serving NCCC members (including Team Leaders) participate in Forest Corps?**

- Because 2025 Forest Corps will begin before graduation for Pacific and Southwest Regions’ 2024 Fall Corps, currently serving members will not

be considered for service in Forest Corps unless the Member has successfully completed their 1700 hour traditional term and can serve with Forest Corps on its regularly scheduled timeline.

- **What about health and safety precautions?**

- Vaccinations Required:
 - Up-to-date Tetanus vaccine, and 2 doses of the MMR
- To request a reasonable accommodation, please complete the [Reasonable Accommodation Request Form](#) in its entirety and click submit at the end of the second page. If you would like to request a Reasonable Accommodation verbally, you may do so by calling 202-360-8082.
- Flu and COVID vaccinations are strongly encouraged, but not required, by NCCC. This strong encouragement is based on the realities that NCCC service is team based and involves many hours together with team members in close quarters, such as travelling in vans, lodging in rooms with bunk beds or in small areas such as church basements, occasionally sleeping in tents, working in confined workspaces indoors, and other similar situations. Also, you may be working in close contact with vulnerable populations, and some of our project sponsors may require members of such a team to be vaccinated, in which case a member without COVID or Flu vaccines would be deployed to a different project, perhaps on a different team.

- **I have asthma. Can I serve in Forest Corps?**

- Perhaps. NCCC's Health Service Unit will work with each applicant to identify potential limitations or barriers to service.

- **How can I train to pass the Work Capacity Test?**

- Ideas for training are included in this US Forest Service brochure: www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/Work-Capacity-Test-brochure.pdf.
- The Work Capacity Test is conducted with a weighted vest that lays on both the chest and the back. Practicing at home with a backpack may not simulate the test properly. It is recommended to practice with weight on both the front and back in order to be prepared for the actual test.

The day you arrive on campus should not be the first time you have attempted to complete the WCT. For best results, we recommend practicing 2-3 months prior to the start of your Forest Corps service.

- Other ideas and sample fitness programs to maintain your health and improve your fitness, from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport (<http://www.fitness.gov>).

- **Will NCCC offer the opportunity to serve with a friend to members in the Forest Corps?**

- Serve with a Friend for Summer of Service and Summer Traditional Corps. We are not offering it for Forest Corps.

- **Who can I contact if I would like more information about Forest Corps?**

- Before and during the application process, please contact: ANCCC@AmeriCorps.gov.
- Once you have accepted the conditional invitation to join the Forest Corps program, please reach out to Pacific Region: NCCCPacific@AmeriCorps.gov.

11.26.2024