

AmeriCorps 101

THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

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AmeriCorps 101 Syllabus

- ▶ What is AmeriCorps?
- ▶ AmeriCorps in NJ – Stats
- ▶ AmeriCorps Members' Benefits
- ▶ Education Award
- ▶ Terms of Service / Term Limits
- ▶ Documentation of Hours Served
- ▶ Prohibited Activities
- ▶ Member Timeline
- ▶ AmeriCorps Pledge

What is AmeriCorps?



WHAT IS AMERICORPS?

So, what is AH-MER-EE-CORE, again?



AmeriCorps “Lingo”

- It’s not a job, internship or a volunteer opportunity – it is service – You are called AmeriCorps members!
- Members Do not earn wages or a salary – you receive a living allowance or stipend
- AmeriCorps members are not employees – you are there to create a change in the community through direct service!
- You are the boots-on-the-ground in the community and you get things done to improve lives!

History of AmeriCorps



President Bill Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities.

What do AmeriCorps Members Do?

- ▶ Educate communities about their environment
- ▶ Renovate and Rebuild Abandoned Homes
- ▶ Provide Tutoring and Mentoring During Non-School Hours
- ▶ Recruit Volunteers
- ▶ Bridge the Digital Divide
- ▶ Assist the Homeless
- ▶ Provide Support to People with Disabilities



Members Get. Things. Done.

Your programs will be creating a huge impact in your communities and improving lives. You'll develop a Theory of Change, propose research that will support that theory of change and provide a logical path to achieving community goals.

Your programs have identified a need in the area and developed a plan to create meaningful change. Your service will help educate students struggling with basic curriculum, teach members of the community to take care of the environment, assist our needy with respect to food insecurity and housing, among other important initiatives.

AmeriCorps Member Fast Facts

- 90 % of members said they gained new skills while in AmeriCorps.
- 80% of members said they are more likely to participate in community service after AmeriCorps.
- 72% of members volunteered after completing their AmeriCorps service.
- Since 1994, AmeriCorps alumni have earned more than \$3.3 billion in education awards, including \$1 billion to repay student debt.



What did AmeriCorps New Jersey Members Accomplish in the 2022/2023 Program Year

- Recruited 1,700+ volunteers
- 410 individuals received addiction intervention services
- 12,000+ children and youth served
- 13,000+ acres of public land improved



Focus Areas

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Economic Opportunity
- ▶ Environmental Stewardship
- ▶ Healthy Futures
- ▶ Disaster Preparedness
- ▶ Veterans and Families



What Do AmeriCorps Members Do For New Jersey Communities?

- ▶ Many programs have members serving in schools and supporting students' improvement with attendance and engagement.
- ▶ Programs serve as a pathway to employment opportunities and help develop vital work skills and financial stability.
- ▶ Members protect thousands of acres of public lands throughout the state to help conserve natural habitats, protect clean air and water and promote energy efficiency.
- ▶ Programs also build capacity at food banks, address food insecurity, combat the opioid crisis, and assist in alleviating homelessness.

New Jersey Volunteers!

New Jersey *Gives Back.*

In 2021, more than **1.4 million** residents volunteered through an organization contributing **\$3.4 billion** in economic value.

More than **3.1 million** residents helped their neighbors in the height of the pandemic.



Member Eligibility Requirements

- Must be 17 years of age or older.
- Must have a High School Diploma or Equivalency; or must **be working** towards the GED.
- Must be a US Citizen or Permanent Resident of the USA.
- Proof: Birth Certificate and/or Specific LIMITED Acceptable Documents



Background Checks: Every Member must Agree to These:



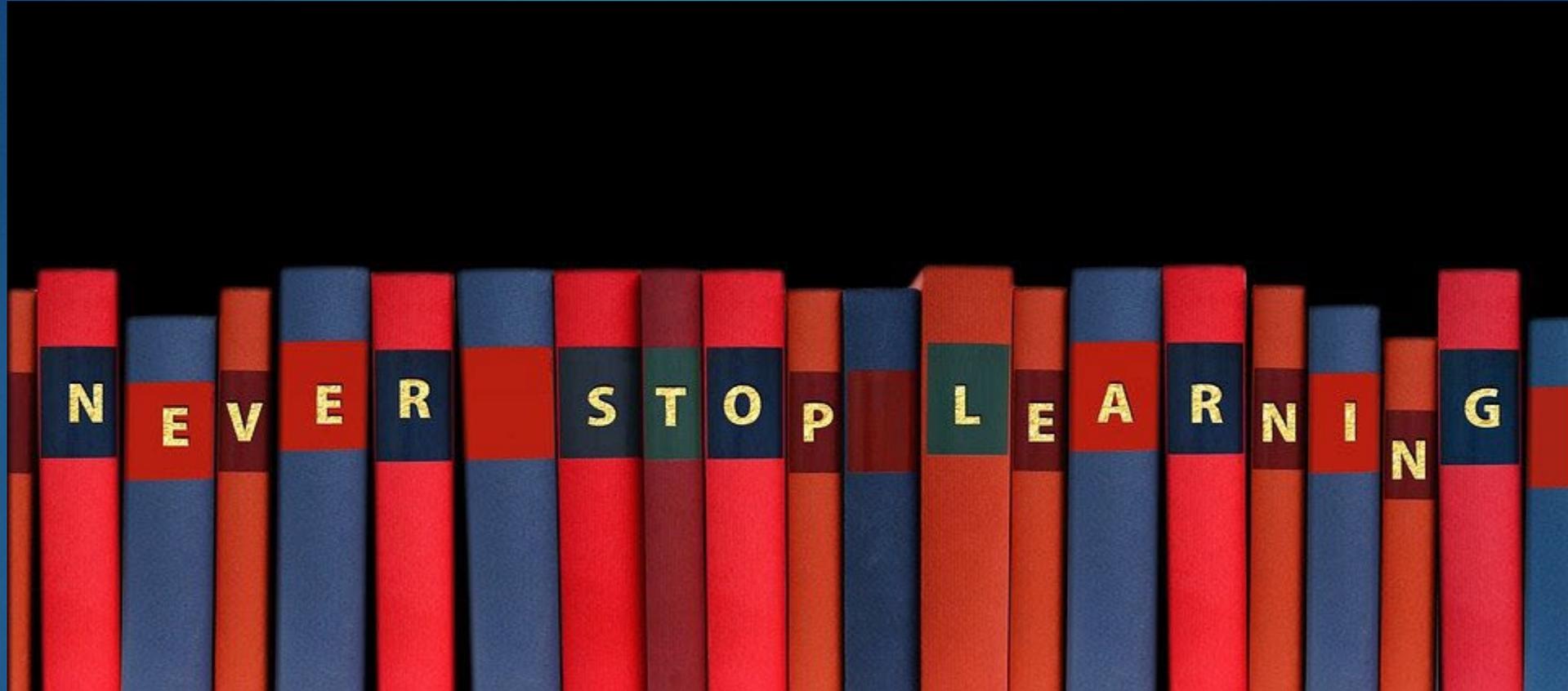
- ▶ The following background checks must be cleared by the NJ Commission *before* AmeriCorps members can be enrolled to begin service:
 - ✓ State Background (TrueScreen)
 - ✓ FBI Fingerprint-based (FieldPrint)
- If you reside outside of New Jersey, additional out-of-state checks are required

Members' Benefits

- ▶ Child Care (For FT members)
- ▶ Health Insurance (For FT members)
- ▶ Student Loan Forbearance (During time of service)
- ▶ Student Loan Interest Accrual Stops
- ▶ Living Allowance
- ▶ Education Award



Education Award



Upon completion of your term of service, members are eligible for an Education Award.

- ▶ The amount of the award corresponds to the hours you have agreed to serve. Upon enrollment, your program director will have not only worked out your weekly living allowance or stipend, but also the total education award amount they'll receive.
- ▶ Members have up to seven years to use the award and it can be used at more than one institution and can help pay more than one loan.
- ▶ If a member is 55 years old or older, the educational award can be transferred once to a child, grandchild, foster child or step child and is held for up to 10 years!

Education Award Amounts

Type of Member Position	Min. # of Hours	Education Award
Full-time	1,700	\$6,895.00
Three Quarter-time	1,200	\$4,826.50
Half-time	900	\$3,447.50
Reduced Half-time	675	\$2,626.27
Quarter-time	450	\$1,824.07
Minimum-time	300	\$1,459.26
Abbreviated-time	100	\$388.03

Terms of Service



A member can serve up to four terms of service... but cannot earn or receive more than the equivalent of 2 full-time awards.



Timesheets: All Members Must Keep Detailed Record of Service Time

- ▶ Members must identify all their service activities in their timesheets.
- ▶ We use OnCorps Reporting system for this. Your Program Director will train you in the use of this system
- ▶ And don't forget to submit them! If timesheets are not submitted properly and regularly, it may negatively affect your in-service and post-service benefits such as your living allowance and education award!
- ▶ Improper timesheet reporting may create a disallowance for your program. Any of the AmeriCorps funds, deemed to have been used improperly, can result in a disallowance.
- ▶ The funds will have to be paid back and a fine may be implemented.

Prohibited Activities

- Attempting to influence **legislation**;
- Organizing or engaging in **protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes**';
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring **union organizing**;
- Impairing existing contracts for services or **collective bargaining agreements**;
- 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;
- Census Activities
- Election and Polling Activities



AmeriCorps: The Best of America





AmeriCorps 101

THANK YOU ALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN LAUNCH!
WELCOME TO THE NEW JERSEY AMERICORPS TEAM!

