



CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE



## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### AmeriCorps NCCC Program Specific Questions

*Last update 7/28/2020*

CNCS is closely monitoring the latest developments related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). As America responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may have concerns about the potential impacts on your program. The below FAQs address questions posed by the outbreak. Check back as they are updated regularly.

*These FAQs do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. You should refer to CNCS's statute and regulations for applicable requirements.*

#### **1. What measures is NCCC taking to support the health and safety of members who will be serving in person?**

NCCC has developed protocols for social distancing, cleaning, housing, use of face coverings, and health screenings based on guidance from the CDC and other experts.

- To ensure necessary social distancing, we will utilize a large and dispersed campus facility with multiple training rooms to minimize interaction.
- In training sessions where multiple teams participate, large training facilities will ensure adequate distance between members.
- All members will be provided face coverings that meet CDC guidance and are required to wear them at all times, unless a reasonable accommodation is needed.
- Routine health screenings will utilize regular temperature checks for everyone on campus. Any member with COVID-19 symptoms is required to disclose those symptoms to NCCC staff immediately.

*[updated 6/9]*

#### **2. Will all members be tested for COVID-19 as a preventative measure?**

COVID-19 testing is not readily available for all NCCC members as a preventative measure. Prior to arrival on campus, NCCC contacts members and screens for symptoms of COVID-19. After arrival, members will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms daily as part of AmeriCorps NCCC's strategy to provide a safe service environment. Any members who report COVID-19 symptoms will be tested at a local testing facility. NCCC is exploring the potential to offer testing upon arrival at campus, if available in the area to non-symptomatic individuals. *[updated 7/28]*

#### **3. What is the protocol if a Member contracts COVID-19 during his/her term of service?**

If a member presents with COVID-19 symptoms, the member will be isolated either on campus or at the service site pending testing. Rooms have been set aside for this purpose. NCCC staff will ensure the member is transported to a medical facility for a COVID-19 test, and the member will remain in isolation until the results

of the test are obtained. If a member tests positive, and does not require hospitalization, they will be isolated for the duration of their illness. Members with negative test results will return to their prior housing. *[updated 7/16]*

**4. What is NCCC’s plan if the number of COVID cases continues to increase?**

NCCC will continue to monitor national, state, and local health guidance regarding COVID-19 to ensure we are aware of the latest developments as we plan for projects and activities. NCCC will adjust our plans depending on the situation, keeping member safety as our highest priority. *[updated 7/16]*

**5. I need a reasonable accommodation to serve in AmeriCorps NCCC because of my medical history and COVID-19. What should I do?**

AmeriCorps NCCC provides reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with federal law. Any NCCC member needing a reasonable accommodation should contact the member’s Unit Leader promptly to discuss. *[updated 7/28]*

**6. Does AmeriCorps NCCC anticipate that project sponsors will need to meet any additional health and/or safety measures related to COVID-19 when teams resume work?**

Project sponsors will be expected to follow national, state, and local health and safety guidelines at the time teams are able to resume service. The health and safety of NCCC members remains our highest priority. Specific questions regarding social distancing and other health and safety guidelines related to AmeriCorps NCCC projects should be directed to regional AmeriCorps NCCC staff. *[updated 6/23]*

**7. The CARES Act increased the upper age limit for participation as an AmeriCorps NCCC Corps Member to 26 years old. What does this mean for applicants?** Under the CARES Act, Section 3514(d), the upper age limit for AmeriCorps NCCC members is 26. AmeriCorps NCCC applies the upper age limit at the time a member arrives on campus and is activated as a member. That means individuals must be on campus and activated as members for at least one day before turning 27. The 26-year upper age limit will remain in effect until further notice. If you are interested in applying, [visit our website](#). *[updated 4/20]*

**8. Will future application deadlines be extended?**

AmeriCorps NCCC has extended the summer class application deadline to June 30, 2020. *[updated 6/23]*

**9. As part of my AmeriCorps NCCC application, I must submit fingerprints. How can I get my fingerprints done if I am unable to get to a fingerprinting location?**

If you run into difficulty getting fingerprints, please contact your Selection and Placement assistant or email ANCCC@cns.gov to discuss options. *[updated 3/25]*

**10. Will future AmeriCorps NCCC graduation events be held in person?**

NCCC graduations occurring in summer 2020 will be streamed on Facebook to allow members to share their accomplishments with family and friends. NCCC will monitor federal, state, and local guidance for graduations that occur after summer 2020 to determine if we can allow families and friends to attend in person. Please continue to monitor the CNCS website and NCCC communications for updates. *[updated 6/23]*

**11. If I graduate from NCCC and do not have a job, does that qualify me for unemployment benefits?**

No. Graduation from the AmeriCorps NCCC program does not constitute a basis for claiming regular unemployment compensation. However, under the CARES Act Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) may be available. Eligibility for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance is not determined by CNCS. Please contact the government agency in your state that administers the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefit with any questions you may have regarding the benefit or contact the US Department of Labor. Please also review CNCS General FAQs. *[updated 4/28]*

**12. Will I still qualify for interest accrual benefits if I was prevented from completing my full term of service due to COVID-19?**

Individuals who have successfully completed a term of service in an AmeriCorps program are eligible to have the National Service Trust (Trust) pay up to 100 percent of the interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. These are the conditions that apply:

- An interest payment can only be made after you have exited the program and have earned a full, partial, or pro-rated education award.
- The percentage of interest accrual benefit that you are eligible to receive is based upon your total service hours accrued, or the amount of time (in days) you were enrolled when you exited.
- If you qualify for additional hours/time under the CARES Act, such hours/time will be provided to the Trust and be considered “hours/time served.”
- The Trust will only pay interest on qualified student loans, as described on the Using Your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award web page.

**For AmeriCorps NCCC**, if your graduation date was advanced and you were exited from the program earlier than planned due to COVID-19, the Trust will pay 100 percent of the interest that accrued on your qualified student loan for 1,700 hours of service. If you decided to exit the AmeriCorps NCCC program early and your exit was a resignation from the program, you are not eligible to have the Trust pay the interest that accrued.

*[updated 4/8]*

**13. Will I still qualify for forbearance if my term of service is in a Suspended Status, or if I am in an Administrative Hold status or on emergency leave, due to COVID-19?**

Per CNCS regulations 45 CFR § 2529.20, your lender is responsible for approving or denying your forbearance request. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)—the federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps—provides verification that you are serving in an approved AmeriCorps position (which includes positions in the AmeriCorps State and National Program (ASN), the AmeriCorps NCCC Program, and the AmeriCorps VISTA Program).

Once you are enrolled in the National Service Trust, you can submit a request online through My AmeriCorps to verify your involvement in AmeriCorps and request that your qualified loans be put in forbearance during your service period. Generally, your loan remains in forbearance until you exit from the program. Exiting from the program includes both exiting at the scheduled end of your service term and exiting early from the program, before the scheduled end. After you exit from the program, you are responsible for repaying your loan according to its terms. For more information, visit our website. *[updated 4/14]*

**14. May AmeriCorps NCCC members receive the full value of the Education Award if they are exited from service early due to COVID-19?**

It depends, but generally members will fall within one of the three following categories:

1. AmeriCorps NCCC members who have served less than 15 percent of their term of service at time of exit: AmeriCorps NCCC members who served less than 15 percent of their term of service at the time they exit are not eligible for a full or prorated Education Award consistent with the Member Handbook.
2. AmeriCorps NCCC members who have served between 15 and 50 percent of their term of service at time of exit: AmeriCorps NCCC members who completed between 15 and 50 percent of the term of service may be exited for a Compelling Personal Circumstance (CPC) and receive an Education Award proportional to the number of hours they have served. They are not eligible for a full Education Award with a CPC exit related to COVID-19.
3. AmeriCorps NCCC members who have served more than 50 percent of their term of service at time of exit: AmeriCorps NCCC members who have completed more than 50 percent of their term of service (i.e., at least 850 hours) may be eligible to receive the full education award amount with a CPC exit related to COVID-19. See CARES Act, § 3514.

*[updated 4/17]*

**15. What does it mean to be exited early from the NCCC program at the direction of CNCS due to COVID-19?** A member is exited early from the NCCC program at the direction of CNCS due to COVID-19 when the National Director determines a class should be ended, members graduated early, or a class should be delayed, because of circumstances related to COVID-19. NCCC has determined that this applies to members who were serving in Traditional Class 25 that began in the summer of 2019 in the North Central, Southern, and Southwest Regions. *[updated 4/17]*