

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AmeriCorps NCCC Program Specific Questions

Last update 3/1/2021

AmeriCorps 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. Refer to AmeriCorps' statute and regulations for applicable requirements.

I am an AmeriCorps NCCC member with questions about my service/benefits, who should I contact?

AmeriCorps NCCC members with questions can review the FAQs below or contact their regional campus staff. Additional information is available by contacting the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677, via [webform](#), or [LIVE CHAT](#).

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. When does NCCC screen and test members for COVID 19?

a. As a preventative measure:

- i. Prior to arrival on all campuses, NCCC contacts all candidates and uses a questionnaire to screen for symptoms of COVID-19.
- ii. Upon **arrival** on campus, all members are tested for COVID-19 as a preventative measure, when tests are available.



- iii. After arrival on campus, NCCC staff **screen members** daily for COVID-19 symptoms as part of NCCC's strategy to provide a safe service environment.
- b. When symptomatic:**
 - i. Any members who report COVID-19 symptoms will be tested at a local testing facility.
- c. When a member has had close contact* with someone that tested positive for COVID**
 - i. If a member or candidate has been in close contact* with someone that tested positive for COVID-19, the member or candidate will be required to quarantine for fourteen (14) days. Any member that has had close contact with the positive member will also be tested for COVID-19, when tests are available.

* Close Contact is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as being within 6 feet of an individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period.

[updated 11/20]

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. 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]**

9. 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 AmeriCorps website and NCCC communications for updates. **[updated 6/23]**

10. 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 AmeriCorps. 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 [AmeriCorps General FAQs](#). **[updated 4/28]**

11. 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]**

12. 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 AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR § 2529.20, your lender is responsible for approving or denying your forbearance request. AmeriCorps—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]**

13. 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]

14. What does it mean to be exited early from the NCCC program at the direction of AmeriCorps due to COVID-19?

A member is exited early from the NCCC program at the direction of AmeriCorps 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]**

15. What can teams expect when serving in the field?

Before teams arrive at a project site, NCCC Region staff work with the project sponsor to ensure the work site and housing meet all NCCC requirements, including COVID-specific requirements for social distancing and sanitization.

While on site, NCCC expects teams to follow state, local, and NCCC guidance for COVID-19, as well as sponsor and site-specific guidance. Members will maximize their safety by following this guidance, including wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing in all interactions with community members. NCCC staff will continue to visit teams on site to provide programmatic support, in addition to being in regular communication.

In prior years, members transitioned between projects by returning to campus and then deploying to a new project site from campus. Moving forward, we expect transitions between projects will happen in the field to reduce travel for teams. **[updated 8/21]**

16. What happens when new members arrive on campus? Will they have to quarantine?

Upon arrival on campus, members will complete paperwork, be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, and begin training. Members are expected to remain on campus for, at minimum, the first fourteen days from the member's first full day on campus, unless Unit Leaders grant permission for a member to leave. If picking up food, the member is expected to follow social distancing practices (e.g., curbside/drive-thru) for the restaurant or grocery store. During the initial fourteen-day period, members are expected to maintain social distance, wear face coverings when in the company of others, and follow all federal, state, local, and NCCC guidance. This protects members, NCCC staff, and the community. **[updated 8/21]**



17. May AmeriCorps designate members serving in AmeriCorps programs or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers as “essential workers”, or as otherwise eligible, for COVID-19 vaccine priority groups?

No, AmeriCorps does not have the authority to designate AmeriCorps members or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers as “essential workers”, or as otherwise eligible, for COVID-19 vaccine priority groups.

Neither members nor volunteers are considered employees at the organizations where they serve. However, to the extent possible, if a grantee is vaccinating employees in line with state and local guidance based on priority group designation, we recommend that they do the same for members who are engaged in the same or similar activities that would fall within the same designation.

Also, members and volunteers are encouraged to research and follow their state guidelines regarding vaccine distribution. **[updated 3/1/2021]**

18. If a grantee or sponsor makes available COVID-19 vaccines for their employees, can the sponsor include members or volunteers in any vaccination plans?

AmeriCorps encourages grantees and sponsors to exercise flexibility and extend the opportunity to AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to participate in any vaccination plans, to the extent permissible by state guidelines. **[updated 3/1/2021]**