

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps

# Member Handbook



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AmeriCorps NCCC  
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# THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS)

## OVERVIEW OF CNCS

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

AmeriCorps engages thousands of Americans each year in intensive service to meet community needs in education, the environment, disaster services, and other areas. Senior Corps 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 Social Innovation Fund, Volunteer Generation Fund, and Nonprofit Capacity Building Program are all designed to increase the capacity and scale of impact for grantee organizations.

CNCS 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.

## OVERVIEW OF AMERICORPS

There are three 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, a team-based residential program for adults age 18-24, who serve out of one of five regional campuses located in Vicksburg, MS; Denver, CO; Baltimore, MD; Sacramento, CA; and Vinton, IA., and serve full-time for approximately 10 months, living and serving together as a team; and
- AmeriCorps VISTA, a program focused on fighting poverty.

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 (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time residential program open to U.S. citizens, nationals, and lawful permanent residents between the ages of 18 and 24, with no upper age limit for Team Leaders. NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with the best aspects of military service, including leadership development and team building. Because Members are trained in disaster services and can be assigned to new duties on short notice, they are particularly well-suited to meet the nation's disaster service needs.

During their service, Members receive lodging, meals, uniforms, health benefits, child care benefits, loan forbearance, and a modest living allowance. All Members receive training in leadership, team building, disaster services, and civic engagement; a small group of Members also receive wildland firefighting training, and all Team Leaders will receive CPR/First Aid certification.

### 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. 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.
- Cleaning up streams.
- Helping communities develop emergency plans.
- 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.

## NCCC-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. NCCC-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. The partnership adds up to an additional 1,000 Members annually within NCCC. NCCC-FEMA Corps members must be U.S. Citizens between the ages of 18-24, with no upper age limit for Team Leaders.

### Program Description:

NCCC-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. NCCC-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.

### NCCC-FEMA Corps Typical 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.

## Team Leaders

Team Leaders are responsible for the general safety, well-being, performance, and personal development of their Corps Members with guidance from the Unit Leader on their campus of origin. Team Leaders will:

- supervise, motivate and direct teams,
- coordinate between Corps Members and the campus Unit Leader,
- supervise team housing, meals and other activities,
- support residential life experience for teams through conflict mediation, crisis intervention and counseling,
- maintain team order, develop team morale, foster team work, ensure safety and monitor standards of 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 all administrative, financial, reporting and personal matters for the team, to include issues related to illness and family emergencies,
- represent NCCC to the media as appropriate,
- supervise Corps Members during traditional breaks, transitions and time off; and
- coordinate deployment logistics with campus 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.

AmeriCorps NCCC is committed to maintaining an environment in which diversity is accepted and celebrated. It is celebrated because each individual contributes a wealth of values and experiences to the work and service environment: age, race, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, education, religion, marital status, socio-economic status, political ideology, and more.

As we welcome and cherish these differences, and as we respect and learn from these differences, we enhance our productivity and overall quality of life and recognize that all people are as one. Therefore, each Member of the AmeriCorps NCCC community is expected to treat all individuals with a common standard of decency.

## 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. CNCS 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 campus management concerning campus 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; and
- appeal inter-campus transfers and dismissal decisions to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC.

### B. Voting, Electoral, and Lobbying Activities

#### 1. Local or Absentee Voting

Campuses will facilitate AmeriCorps NCCC Members' ability to vote, either locally or by absentee ballot.

#### 2. Voting Procedures

Campuses will provide assistance on voting procedures, including assisting eligible voters to request absentee ballots, 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. CNCS 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 their 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, or CNCS. Individuals may not participate in partisan political activity as part of their service or duties, or when such activities would be perceived as part of their duties.

## C. Rights Relative 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 their service or duties, or when such activities would be perceived as part of their 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 NCCC uniform.

## D. Right to Reasonable Accommodation (Physical/Mental Disabilities)

AmeriCorps NCCC will not deny the benefits of its activities or services to qualified applicants with disabilities and will

make reasonable accommodation for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified Member. In this regard, AmeriCorps NCCC will not deny participation in AmeriCorps NCCC to applicants who, for example, test positive for HIV or have a mental disability that is controlled by medication. However, AmeriCorps NCCC may deny participation to an individual who has an active, contagious disease that constitutes a direct threat to the individual or to others.

Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- assignment to a campus that is accessible to an otherwise qualified individual;
- making designated facilities readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities;
- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, or providing readers or interpreters; and
- other similar actions that do not impose an undue financial or administrative burden on AmeriCorps NCCC or that would fundamentally alter the program.

Individuals are responsible for identifying their specific accommodation need(s). AmeriCorps NCCC will not impose an accommodation on any Member. The Member must:

- identify himself or herself and his or her needs to the Region Director through the Team Leader, Unit Leader, and/or Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership;
- work with appropriate staff to specify, arrange, and follow through on accommodations; and
- alert the Team Leader and Unit Leader immediately to problems he or she encounters that AmeriCorps NCCC can help resolve.

The National Director will make the final decision on accommodation, in consultation with appropriate CNCS offices.

## E. Right to Privacy

### 1. Member Records

The Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. §552a), and CNCS's 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 CNCS. It also gives them appropriate access to their own records, including

adequate opportunity to correct errors in their 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 will delegate, in writing, a staff member who will be responsible for the maintenance and safeguarding of AmeriCorps NCCC Members' personnel and medical records.

## 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 the Corporation for National and Community Service who have a need for such information in the official performance of their 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).

A complete list of routine uses is published with CNCS'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 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.

- In addition, 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.

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

## F. Searches and Seizures

### 1. Searches by Campus Staff

Campuses 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 their room, by roommates or others, subject themselves to the possibility that all of their private possessions in that room may be searched, and they may be prosecuted for any stolen goods or illegal



substances found in their 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

It is the policy of CNCS and NCCC to prohibit harassment and illegal discrimination in its programs.

A Member who believes that he or she has been subject to illegal discrimination may contact the Corporation's Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness (OCRI), 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.

OCRI may be contacted by mail: 250 E St. SW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20525; by phone: (202) 606-7503; by fax: (202) 565-3465; or by e-mail to: [eo@cns.gov](mailto:eo@cns.gov)

# 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 their actions; therefore, their conduct should always be in the best interests of AmeriCorps NCCC. All AmeriCorps NCCC Members will:

1. model civic pride and responsibility in their daily conduct and behavior, and, at all times, conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on them and on AmeriCorps NCCC;
2. 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;
3. conduct themselves in such a manner so as to avoid intentional or reckless harm to other persons;

4. adhere to the rules and regulations of AmeriCorps NCCC, the host facility (if any), and all applicable city, state, and federal laws;
5. bear a fair share of the workload and exhibit, at a minimum, satisfactory performance;
6. be punctual for scheduled activities and service assignments;
7. use tools, fire equipment, and safety equipment in a safe and proper manner;
8. refrain at all times from using profanity in professional settings;
9. wear the AmeriCorps NCCC uniform with pride and in accordance with the uniform standards; and
10. maintain appropriate personal hygiene.

## B. Prohibitions

### 1. Firearms and Other Weapons

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

### 2. Illegal and Prescription Drugs

Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, or the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication, is strictly prohibited.

### 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

Except in designated areas and with the supervisor's approval, the use of tobacco products and tobacco delivery methods, including, but not limited to, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and hookahs, 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 a 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 NCCC service responsibilities, that outside activity must cease if the Member desires to continue serving in the 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 staff and Members are expected to comply with, implement, and support the decision.

## F. Prohibited Relationships and 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/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/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 removal.

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; and
- 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

## A. Official Sanctions

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.

### 1. Verbal Warnings

AmeriCorps Team Leaders and NCCC staff in the Member's chain of command 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 NCCC staff members will be reported to the appropriate individual in the Member's chain of command. The Member will also be informed that if he or she repeats the infraction, then further disciplinary action will be initiated.

### Summary Table of Disciplinary Authority

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 Counseling/Reprimand		
	Behavior Contract		
		Fines (up to \$100/incident)	
		Suspension (up to 5 days per incident)	
			Intercampus Transfer
			Dismissal

## 2. Written Warnings

AmeriCorps Team Leaders and NCCC staff in the Member's chain of command 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 his or her 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 his or her Unit Leader.

## 3. Extra Duties

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 his or her room and common areas), the Team Leader or a NCCC staff person in the Member's chain of command may impose extra duties in order to correct the deficiency (Please see above chart). The maximum number of hours for extra duties 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. These extra duties must be documented by the imposing person.

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

## 4. Letters of Counseling/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 a NCCC staff person in the Member's chain of command, a Letter of Counseling/Reprimand may be drafted. This is a written documentation of an incident report 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

his or her 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 written incident report will be put in Member's personnel file along with any rebuttal submitted by the Member. If the Letter of Counseling/Reprimand is generated by a Unit Leader, a copy will be forwarded to the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership and the Region Director.

## 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 a NCCC staff person in the Member's chain of command. 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, he or she 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.

## 6. Fines

At the discretion of the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director, a Member may be fined not more than \$100 for each occurrence of misconduct, and the fine may be in combination with other disciplinary actions (e.g., extra instruction or duties, etc.) Fines may be imposed only after the Member is informed of the reason for the fine and given an opportunity to rebut and an official determination to impose the fine is made by the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director. Fines may not be deducted from the living allowance and must be paid within a certain time period, as specified by the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director. Failure to pay may result in further disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal. All fines must be paid in full in order to receive an education award and to successfully complete the program. The Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director may suspend the imposition of a fine, or

any portion thereof, for a specified period (not to exceed 90 days). The Deputy Region Director for Unit Leadership or Region Director may vacate the suspended portion of the fine based on subsequent appropriate behavior during the specified suspension period. Before a suspended fine can be re-imposed, the Region Director must notify the Member of his or her intent and the reasons for the decision.

## B. Suspension, Loss of Privileges, and 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, he or she may reduce the imposition of all or a portion of the suspension or waive all or a portion of the suspension 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:

1. Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, including failing an AmeriCorps NCCC drug test, or the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication; or
2. Serving or providing alcohol to individuals under 21 years of age, with knowledge that the individual was underage.

If, after following the appropriate procedures (below), the Region Director finds that the Member committed either (1) or (2) above, the Region Director must dismiss the Member.





## 2. Discretionary Dismissals

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 himself or herself 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 their 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; and
- 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.

## 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 and 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 his or her 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, he or she 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 are in a probationary status from the day they arrive on campus through Induction (which is the last day of CTI) and during the 35 calendar days following Induction. 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 also provide the individual sufficient opportunity (of at least 24 hours) to prepare to present his or her case to the Region Director at a hearing. 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 on his or her behalf. 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 a Dismissal Hearing

Depending on the nature of the misconduct, the Deputy Region Director for Unit Leaders or Region Director may, at his or her discretion, either allow the individual to continue his or her 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 himself or herself or to others, the Region Director may remove him or her from the campus or project location

until a hearing can be held. If a suspended Member is ultimately reinstated, he or she may, at the Region Director's discretion, receive all or part of the allowances and service credit forfeited during the period of suspension.

## F. Transfers within Campuses

The transfer of Members to other teams and units within the campus is considered to be an internal campus-level 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 their campus, including criteria for intra-campus transfers. AmeriCorps NCCC does not permit transfers into or out of the AmeriCorps NCCC program.

## G. 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 campus 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 campus 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 his or her 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 his or her 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.

## i. Status of Members During Appeal

Following appropriate due process procedures (see Disciplinary Standards, Section E, page 14) 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 and service hours may, depending on the totality of the circumstances, be restored.

## ii. 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.

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Once an individual has indicated (either orally or in writing) that specific conduct is offensive, any continued offensive conduct or statement will be considered to be sexual harassment; or
- Acts of sexual harassment by contractor personnel and non-employees (i.e., project sponsors).

## C. Responsibilities

### 1. In General

Members will receive appropriate training, guidance, and instruction on the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment.

### 2. Region Directors

In order to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment, Region Directors will:

- inform Members that sexual harassment is prohibited and will not be tolerated and that appropriate corrective action will be taken against persons who engage in such conduct. Appropriate corrective action may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program;
- ensure that all individuals are knowledgeable concerning AmeriCorps NCCC's sexual harassment policies;
- inform Members that they should report, in a timely manner, all sexual harassment to the appropriate leader, or higher level staff member, as appropriate; and
- investigate immediately all complaints of sexual harassment brought to their attention.

### 3. Members

Members will:

- bring conduct that they believe constitutes sexual harassment to the attention of senior staff;

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

## A. Definition

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment or service;
- submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual; or
- submission to, or rejection of, such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

## B. Prohibited Practices

It is the responsibility of AmeriCorps NCCC and its Members to report, prevent, and eliminate sexual harassment, whenever possible. Examples of prohibited practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Acts of "quid pro quo" sexual harassment, wherein an individual demands sexual favors for benefits;



- assist Campus Staff (TL, UL, RD, DRDUL), as may be required, in receiving, investigating, and resolving informal complaints or reports of alleged sexual harassment;
- cooperate in the investigation of informal or formal complaints of alleged sexual harassment by providing any information they may possess concerning the matters under investigation;
- ensure that their conduct does not sexually harass any other Member, contractor personnel, visitor, or other individual connected with the service site; and
- cooperate with AmeriCorps NCCC's efforts to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment and to maintain an environment free from such conduct.

## D. Additional Considerations

Sexual harassment is not limited to prohibited conduct by a male toward a female, nor by a superior toward a subordinate. A man as well as a woman may be the target of sexual harassment and a woman as well as a man may be the harasser. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex from the harasser. The harasser does not have to be the victim's supervisor. The harasser could be a supervisor who does not supervise the victim, a project sponsor or one of its employees, a non-supervisory employee, a co-worker, a fellow Member, an agent of AmeriCorps NCCC, or a contract employee. The victim does not have to be the person toward whom the unwelcomed sexual conduct is directed, but may be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person. For example, sexual harassment of a Member may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or service environment for others.

Sexual harassment does not depend on whether the victim has suffered an economic loss as result of the harasser's misconduct. For example, improper sexual advances that do not result in the denial of promotion, benefits, or the discharge of the victim may, nonetheless, constitute sexual harassment when they interfere with the victim's work or service, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

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

- Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors in return for job or service benefits;
- Unwelcome letters, telephone calls, or distribution or display of materials of a sexual nature;

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual assault);
- Unwelcome and deliberate touching, leaning over, covering, or pinching;
- Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures;
- Unwelcome pressure for sexual favors;
- Unwelcome pressure for dates;
- Discussion of sexually explicit materials or experiences;
- Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions;
- According favorable treatment to those who grant sexual favors; or
- Attempting to control, influence, or affect the life of an individual through behavior of a sexual nature.

## E. Sanctions

Any violation of the above rules will be investigated and strict disciplinary measures will be taken if sexual harassment is found to have occurred. At minimum:

- Members may be disciplined or dismissed from the program.
- AmeriCorps NCCC services may be withdrawn from a sponsoring organization, at the discretion of the Region Director.
- Physical assaults of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual assault) will result in dismissal proceedings and may be grounds for criminal prosecution.

## F. Sexual Assault

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

## a. COMPASSION

We will treat you with dignity and respect. No one deserves to be sexually assaulted.

## b. SAFETY

We will take appropriate steps to provide for your on-going safety.

## c. SUPPORT

We will be available for you and provide you with the support you need.

## d. CONTINUATION OF SERVICE

We will work closely with you to make decisions regarding your continued service.

## e. PRIVACY

You have the option of two reporting procedures:

- (i) **Confidential reporting.** It is our intent to designate a Point of Contact (POC) for Confidential Reporting of sexual assault for victims through NCCC Headquarters in Washington, DC, in 2017 that Members may contact confidentially if they think they have been a victim of sexual assault. This designated POC for confidential reporting of sexual assault can provide support and

information on local and national resources for victims of sexual assault. The trained staff fulfilling the role of the designated POC for confidential reporting of sexual assault will not divulge any information to anyone without your consent – unless you or other campus Members or staff are, in the opinion of the trained staff, in imminent danger. If the responder believes that danger is present, and if at all practicable, he or she will discuss his or her intent with you before contacting the campus. Until NCCC designates the POC for Confidential Reporting of sexual assault, confidential support is available through the national resources listed below.

- (ii) **Non-confidential reporting** to campus officials, campus counselors, and/or law enforcement.

If you choose the non-confidential reporting procedure, we will endeavor to respect your privacy and limit disclosure of your identity and the details of the incident only to those who have an official need to know.

Victims of sexual assault and/or harassment are encouraged to seek guidance from trusted resources. The following resources are available, free of charge, to victims and their families and friends:

- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
- [www.RAINN.org](http://www.RAINN.org): provides educational resources and support opportunities.
- 1-800-656-HOPE (4673): one-on-one, confidential, crisis support 24/7 with trained staff members.



- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
- [www.NSVRC.org](http://www.NSVRC.org) : provides search tool for anti-sexual assault organizations located across the US and educational materials for victims and advocates.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

Substance 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, and the improper possession, use, or distribution of prescription medication, and alcohol abuse of the part of its employees (including volunteer and contractor personnel) and 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 the campus with locating services and transportation to nearby treatment programs. Prior to utilizing this assistance, Members must disclose addiction issues to a campus counselor, UL, and/or DRDUL. Provided services will be documented in writing by the campus (counselor, UL, and/or DRDUL), along with outlined documentation of Member's expectations during service term and while utilizing treatment options.

### A. Definitions

1. Substance - medications, drugs of abuse, or toxins.
2. Alcohol - products containing ethyl alcohol or ethanol, such as beer, wine, or spirits.
3. Drugs - any substance taken into the body, other than alcohol, which may impair one's mental faculties and/or physical performance.
4. Abuse - 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.

5. Tobacco - any tobacco product, including cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, chewing tobacco (and other smokeless tobacco products), as delivered through hookahs, pipes, or cigars.

### 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 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, page 14.)

#### 2. Possession and Consumption of Alcohol

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, or vehicles used during a spike and/or provided by a sponsor organization. During travel days to and from campus and a team's spike location, no Member of the team shall consume alcohol.

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.

#### i. 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.

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

Alcohol is permitted in mixed groups consisting of underage and of age Team Leaders and Corps Members. However, 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 his/her 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.

## **iii. 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.

## **iv. Personal Responsibility**

Members are responsible for their 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 including termination.

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

Members over 21 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 and 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, after UL approval.

## **4. Legal Medications and 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 and Controlled Substances**

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 (see Disciplinary Standards, Section E, page 14.)

Upon their arrival to the program, all AmeriCorps NCCC Members must pass an initial drug screening test in order to continue in the program. Campuses 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 (see Disciplinary Standards, Section E, page 14.)

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

- a. The Member voluntarily identifies himself or herself as a user of illegal drugs prior to being identified (either officially or unofficially) for testing.
- b. The Member agrees to obtain 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 their 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 will report to work in a fit condition to perform their 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

Individuals on physician-prescribed medication must notify their immediate supervisor 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 their 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 Use

Campuses will designate specific areas on campus 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, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and hookahs, 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.

# UNIFORM AND GROOMING STANDARDS

## A. General

The AmeriCorps NCCC uniform enhances public recognition and perception of AmeriCorps NCCC. The uniform must be worn whenever representing NCCC in an official capacity. Members must wear the uniform whenever they are visiting 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 and Training Periods

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

### 1. Positive Image

AmeriCorps NCCC Members must maintain a positive and professional image in their 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 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 their shirts in, may not wear tank tops or tube tops or go shirtless. Pants cannot be rolled past standard shoe height. Socks must be a solid color; black,

white or gray; and worn below the knee. Steel-toed boots are standard footwear for safety reasons. When boots are not needed, footwear must be closed-toed, closed-heeled, and appropriate for working conditions. The bandana is issued for personal protective use or as a headband, not as an accessory. It is not to be worn while off-duty, in schools, or at professional events.

The Region Directors may require certain dress for special occasions and ceremonial events.

### 3. Non-Issued Uniform Items

Any layers of non-issued visible clothing (e.g., shirts layered under a uniform) must be a solid color that is white, black, or grey.

Members may wear their own 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. Members may wear sponsor-issued safety equipment.

### 4. Jewelry

Due to safety concerns, the only types of jewelry that may be worn outside the Member uniform, or while on duty, are watches, bracelets, and ear studs or small earrings no larger than a dime; multiple earrings complying with the policy are permitted. All tunnels in the ears must be solid. Necklaces are permissible, but if they are long and loose, they must be tucked inside the uniform shirt. All other facial or visible jewelry except small nose studs are



prohibited while the Member is performing official AmeriCorps NCCC duties or while in uniform. Additionally, AmeriCorps NCCC, when appropriate, will adhere to more restrictive standards set by the project sponsor.

## 5. Hair

Hair, mustaches, and beards must be clean and neatly styled. Hair dyed unnatural colors or two-tone is prohibited. 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. Headbands must be solid colored black, white, or grey.

Headgear, such as hats and bandanas, may not be worn inside at any time, with the exception of personal protective equipment, e.g., hardhats during a construction project.

## 6. Grooming Standards

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

## C. Guidelines during Leisure Hours

During leisure hours, Members may wear the clothing of their 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 NCCC housing. Members may wear their NCCC cold weather gear during leisure hours if unable to provide their own, or come from an area in which such attire is not necessary. However, in no circumstance should NCCC issued items be worn while consuming alcohol or at bars and 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 wouldn't want their 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 NCCC staff members, Team Leaders, or fellow Corps Members, by name).

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

## A. Use of National Service Insignia

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

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

The CNCS 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; or
- Supporting for-profit, commercial activities, a labor union, or a partisan political organization.

### A. Team Leader and 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 campus 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; and
- other uses, as deemed necessary, by appropriate staff.

On or through any systems provided by CNCS 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; or
  - ◇ 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 must comply with all NCCC policies and procedures; he or she must also adhere to more restrictive standards set by FEMA.



## LIVING ALLOWANCE

During their term of service, Members will receive a living allowance. The living allowance begins on the first day of the program and ceases when the individual leaves the program. The amount of this allowance is determined by CNCS.

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 (see pay calendar for specific dates). The Member is responsible for entering and keeping his or her bank account information updated in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members can view or print their earnings statements in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members' allowance will continue while on program breaks unless otherwise stated. Members should report payroll errors to their campus Member Support Specialist.

### 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 their 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 their arrival on campus. Members must enter their direct deposit information into the portal during orientation/in-processing.

### B. Federal and 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 his or her state taxes.

### C. Unemployment Compensation

The loss of a living allowance at the end of the AmeriCorps NCCC program does not constitute a basis for claiming unemployment compensation.

## HEALTH BENEFITS AND 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 Employees Compensation Act

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 their own misconduct, intoxication, or willful intent to bring about injury or death to themselves or others. Claims will be submitted to OWCP via the Member Support Specialist only upon the Member's termination from AmeriCorps NCCC. Benefits approved under FECA begin after termination from AmeriCorps NCCC service and include



payment for continuing medical care and compensation for wage loss 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. If a Member chooses, they can file worker's compensation paperwork with the Member Support Specialist, who will send the paper to NCCC Headquarters at the end of the Member's term of service. Members can also file a compensation claim after they have left the program.

The Member Support Specialist will provide the participant with the necessary federal employment compensation forms (CA-1 or CA-2) to protect his or her right to apply for OWCP for compensation. The CA-1 form, "Notice of Traumatic Injury," should be filed when an accident or physical injury occurs during performance of duties. The CA-2 form, "Notice of Occupational Disease or Illness," should be filed when a disease or illness is suspected of being service-related. Although an illness or injury may not appear to be serious enough to result in compensation eligibility, the claim forms should be filed to protect the participant's rights in the event that complications develop at a later date. Members have three years from the date of injury or three years from the date they realized that the illness was service-connected.

## 3. Campus Responsibilities

Campuses will:

- advise and assist individual claimants regarding the preparation, submission, and follow-up of their respective FECA claims;
- provide appropriate assistance in compiling and submitting all pertinent information relating to FECA claims; and
- submit all FECA claims and relevant material to the Corporation's National Office, which is responsible for review, submission, and follow up with OWCP concerning all claims.

## 4. 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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov> or by calling the National Service Trust Hotline at 1-888-942-2677.

### 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 their 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 <https://www.nationalservice.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 their award only as noted above and may use all or any portion at any time after the completion of their term of service. For example, Members may apply a portion of their 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 their 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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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

Near the completion of a Member's term of service, he or she 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 this money may either delay, or totally preclude, the receipt of the education award. The amount owed is not offset against the education award.

To have a payment made from their Trust account, all Members must access their education award through the My AmeriCorps Portal. Members should click on the "Create Education Award Payment Request" under the My Education Award tab in the left sidebar; identify the loan holder or the school they plan to attend and indicate the amount of the payment; and click submit to send it to the school. Members should follow-up with the school to ensure they received the money.

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

Members have the option of postponing repayment of their qualified student loans while enrolled in an AmeriCorps program. The type of loan postponement for which AmeriCorps Members are eligible is referred to as a forbearance, and it is based upon their national service. A Member's lender will be able to tell the Member if a

particular loan qualifies for this forbearance or any other type of postponement while the Member is serving. 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 their service. Members should click on the "Create Forbearance Request" under the My Education Award tab in the left sidebar; selecting their 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.

Members should check with their lenders to determine whether their student loans qualifies for other types of postponements.

## 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 his or her education award balance.

Unless a Member completes his or her 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 their loan holders.

In order to obtain this forbearance, Members must submit a Forbearance Request through the My AmeriCorps Portal at the completion of their term of service. Members should click on the "Create Interest Payment Request" under the My Education Award tab in the left sidebar; selecting their 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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov>. Some general information is provided below:

### 1. What do I need to do to get an 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 his/her term of service, 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 their 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 and Personal Circumstances" on page 29.)

## **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?**

CNCS 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, when you submit your request for forbearance to your loan holder, you should include the dates of your service.

## **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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov>.



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

You may call the National Service Trust Hotline at CNCS at 1-888-942-2677 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 <https://my.americorps.gov>.

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

### 1. Less than 1,700 hours completed

CNCS 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. CNCS’s 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); or
- 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 his or her 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

### 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
Less than 1700 hours	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
At least 1700 hours	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” as described in section G2 on page 30.

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 that he or she doesn't enjoy the work;
- because of the size of the living allowance; or
- in order to move to another area of the 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 contract. If the Member resigns for any of these reasons or other reasons that are within his or her control, the individual will receive no portion of the education award.

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 CNCS, 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 he or she believes that the award is justified. The Region Director will then determine the validity of the request and provide the documentation to justify his or her recommendation on the end of term of service form. No pro-rated award is permitted without the approval of the Region Director.

## 2. At least 1700 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 with another service organization (e.g. AmeriCorps State & National, AmeriCorps VISTA, Peace Corps, or the armed forces). Individuals departing the program may be approved to leave up to 7 days before their 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.

## 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 you are active in service; the maximum amount of child care assistance a Member can receive is up to \$400 per month per child under the age of 13. To determine whether or not he or she qualifies for the AmeriCorps NCCC child care benefit, the Member should contact the Member Support Specialist. Qualification depends, among other factors, on household income and custodial relationship to the child(ren).

Please note that child care benefit is paid directly to eligible child care providers, not to AmeriCorps NCCC Members.

## EMERGENCY LEAVE AND 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. 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; or
- Grandparents.

Members traveling on emergency leave are required to furnish their own transportation both to and from the emergency site. Members granted emergency leave will be entitled to receive their 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 their absence.

## B. Personal Absences

Members are authorized three personal days leave during their term of service. Living allowances will be paid during their approved personal leave. Service hours will not be earned during these three 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 their circumstances require their presence away from the campus, may submit a written request for personal leave through their 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.

## C. Life After AmeriCorps Days

All Members are authorized two Life After AmeriCorps days leave during their 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.

## D. Absent Without Leave (AWOL)

Members AWOL from AmeriCorps NCCC will be subject to a dismissal hearing. Members who are AWOL for seven calendar days and do not return may be dismissed from the program in absentia.

# TRAVEL TO AND FROM CAMPUS

AmeriCorps NCCC will provide travel for the following:

- Travel from the Member's Home of Record (HOR) to the campus;

- Member travel to HOR from the campus upon termination;
- 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. Campus Arrival

AmeriCorps NCCC will assist Members with their transportation arrangements and expenses to their designated campus based upon the Member's HOR.

Upon acceptance into the program, Members will be required to complete the Transportation Selection Form in the Welcome Packet. Submission of this form by the requested date is critical for making travel arrangements in a timely manner, notifying the Member of the travel arrangements, and subsequently permitting the Members to plan their arrival accordingly.

## B. Campus Departure

### 1. Completion of Program Travel

During the eighth month of service, the Member Support Specialist will complete Corporation Form 311 to provide information for departure travel. Based upon this information, the Members will be prepaid any travel entitlement by debit card or cash 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 his or her HOR for return travel, the Member must write a letter to the Region Director or his/her designee as soon as the change occurs, 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. A change of the Member's HOR from a location inside the continental U.S. to a location outside the United States or the Territories of the United States will result in the Member receiving a travel reimbursement not to exceed the amount authorized for travel to the original HOR (see "Other Options" on page 33, section E3). Departing Members receive their itineraries approximately two weeks before their departure.



## 2. Early Departure for Program/ Termination Travel

Members are authorized one-way travel expenses for return to their HOR upon voluntary or involuntary early termination from the program. The entitlements are the same as those described in “Travel Methods” in section E.

## C. Team Leader Relocation Allowance

The purpose of the Team Leader relocation allowance is to assist the Team Leaders in transferring personal items from their HOR to their 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.

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.

## D. Travel Not Covered by AmeriCorps NCCC

Personal, non-official travel will be neither arranged nor funded by AmeriCorps NCCC. This includes authorized emergency leave as defined in the handbook. Members assume personal and financial responsibility for these trips. AmeriCorps NCCC cannot provide advances or loans to Members for these expenses. It is not possible to use CNCS’s travel agency or to receive a government rate ticket, when traveling for personal reasons.

## E. Travel Methods

The following outlines the options a Member has when determining how to travel to/from campus:

### 1. Travel by Commercial Carrier

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

Members authorized to travel via air or bus will be provided a ticket issued by the campus. 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 or ticket on 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, he or she should consider purchasing a bus/rail/air ticket using the method described in the “Other Options” section.

## **ii. Plane**

If the trip is between the Member’s HOR and campus is over 50 miles, an airline ticket will be purchased by the campus’s 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 an AmeriCorps NCCC staff member. Members should notify the Member Support Specialist if they are travelling more than 50 miles between their HOR and the airport.

## **iii. Bus**

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

## **iv. Airline Baggage**

In order to be reimbursed for their one bag, the incoming Members must provide the Resource Manager 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, Obligor and Payment Voucher and provide it to the Resource Manager 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 AdTrav. No receipt from the Member is necessary; after all, the Members will be flying home and unable to show their receipt for baggage costs. The Member Support Specialist will prepare a NCCC Form 311, Obligor and Payment Voucher, which will be used as a receipt to account for the payment.

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

Members travelling by POV will be reimbursed at the mileage rate determined by GSA. An AmeriCorps NCCC 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 plus a \$3.00 debit card service fee. 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 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. This option does not apply to Early Dismissal travel.

If a Member decides to stay within the area of the campus after graduation, the Member has up to 30 days after graduation to purchase tickets for departure travel and receive reimbursement for a ticket purchased with personal funds. This does not apply to Early Dismissal travel.

## **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. Campuses generally may not ship a Member’s personal belongings without prior authorization from the Region Director.

## RESIDENTIAL LIVING

### A. General

#### 1. Roommates

Residences are co-ed; however, only those of the same gender will be assigned as roommates.

#### 2. Assignment of Roommates

To fulfill the national service goal 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

While on campus, separate bathroom facilities will be designated for males and females. Members will use the bathroom as assigned to a room, based on the gender they identify with. Under no circumstances should any person use the bathroom facilities of the opposite sex.

#### 4. Attire

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

#### 5. Firearms and 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 their 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 his or her roommate's verbal consent for any other NCCC Member, either male or female, to be in his or her 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 his or her 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"). 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 their own risk. Rooms should be locked when no one is in the room.

## 12. Linens

Members will furnish their own 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); and
- 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 and 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

Anyone discovering a fire will immediately activate all alarms and emergency evacuation devices, alert and evacuate individuals with disabilities, and notify the Residence Coordinator or on-duty Team Leader and fire department of the type and location of the fire.

### 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 their task. Team Leaders will account for all Corps Members on their team and provide such information to the Unit Leader or duty 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 and Safety Policies

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

## E. Visitors and 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 campus policies.

### 3. Rules and 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 Residential Living, Section A(9) on page 34.)

## INSPECTIONS

### A. Staff Inspections

#### 1. Periodic Inspections

Health, safety, and sanitation inspections will be conducted periodically by campus 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, he or she 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 campus 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 his or her observation to law enforcement authorities.

## 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 and 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 his or her 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 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.

POVs may not be taken to a spike location.

## 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; and
- 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 in which at least three Members are participating.

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; and
- 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 12:00am – 6:00am, unless the team received prior approval from the Unit Leader.

NCCC vehicles cannot be provided to sponsors for their use. They can be used as part of a team project but can only be driven by 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; and
- 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; and



- 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 NCCC Members

The Region Director may approve the transport of approved visitors, project sponsors or training facilitators, CNCS or other government employees (to include FEMA 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; or
- 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 and Certification of 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 their driving histories are appropriate, and that they possess a current license.

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 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 safeties 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 safeties for work-related functions (navigation, answering the TL phone, etc.).

## F. 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.

## G. Responsibility of Authorizing Officials

Team Leaders 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.

## H. Traffic Offenses

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 he or she 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.

## I. 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 their 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.

## 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.

NCCC-FEMA Corps Members may drive FEMA fleet or rental vehicles under the following conditions:

1. Only AmeriCorps NCCC-approved drivers may drive FEMA vehicles; and
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).





# WELFARE OF MEMBERS

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

## SAFETY

### A. Training and 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 their 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 their 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.

### 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 their appropriate storage areas. Report any discrepancies to the Unit Leader.

### 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.

#### 1. Protective Clothing and 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 their 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 and Steel-Toed 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
- any other area where the Team Leader 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 and Respirators

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 their 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 their 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 and 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 Corporation for National and Community Service, 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 their equipment.
- Identify any medications they are using that could affect the safe operation of tools and vehicles.
- Ensure that all passengers riding in their vehicles wear appropriate restraining devices.
- Not smoke, burn candles or incense, or create a fire safety hazard in their rooms.

### K. Sanctions

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

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Each campus 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. All other AmeriCorps NCCC staff are encouraged to participate in the campus physical fitness program. 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 and 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 lightening is visible.

#### 4. Health Concerns

No individual will be required to participate in any exercise that is reasonably beyond his or her physical capability or that would constitute a direct threat to his or her 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 campus community subscribes to the principle of physical fitness for all Members.

### 2. Exercise and 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 their 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 designed so that participants see its value. Members should consider physical training to be time well spent, and realize its personal benefits.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Members should be prepared to spend a substantial amount of their 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

In making decisions about outside activities in cold weather, staff should consider the outside air temperature, the wind chill factor, and access to a water supply and snacks. 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; and
- 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. 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;
- undertake less physically strenuous work tasks;
- take frequent breaks;
- avoid working outdoors at mid-day;
- be monitored frequently; and
- 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, or heavy precipitation, campuses 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 lightening is visible, teams may not work outside.

## D. Responsibility of the Team Leader

Subject to direction from his or her 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 is 50 miles or more from the campus and requires an overnight stay away from the campus for one or more nights.

## A. General

### 1. Length of Spikes

No team will be away from the campus for more than 60 continuous days unless approved by the National Office. NCCC-FEMA Corps teams, however, can stay away from the campus more than 60 days without approval from the National Office. Teams may spend several months of their overall term of service on spike.

### 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.

### 3. Communication

Regularly scheduled communication lines must exist between the spike camp and the campus.

## B. Supervision and 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 NCCC continuously occupies the housing site and may only be adjusted if there is a compelling safety or programmatic interest to do so.

## 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, 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 their 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 campus 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 campus 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 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; and
- 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.



## 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.

"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). Members participating in the Corps Ambassador Program (CAP) as recruitment stewards may receive direct service credit for this service. 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 NCCC, or while using AmeriCorps NCCC resources may not engage in any of the following activities:

- (1) Attempting to influence legislation.
- (2) Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes.
- (3) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing.
- (4) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.
- (5) 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.

- (6) 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.
- (7) 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.
- (8) 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 their own initiative; and (E) organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (7), unless the position is not used to support those religious activities.
- (9) Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; or
- (10) Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS resources to conduct a voter registration drive.

#### 3. Duties Not Considered Service

- Service that supports 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.

## B. INDEPENDENT SERVICE PROJECT HOURS

All AmeriCorps NCCC Corps 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, according to the following chart:

	Minimum Number of ISP hours that must be completed to graduate		Maximum number of ISP hours that may be completed for service credit	
	Corps Member	Team Leader	Corps Member	Team Leader
Traditional NCCC Corps	80	No Minimum ISP hours	No upper limit	No upper limit
NCCC-FEMA Corps	10	No minimum ISP hours	40	40

ISPs must be approved by designated campus staff and must be performed so as not to interfere with regular, team-based projects- mostly during evenings and weekends. NCCC-FEMA Members may only earn hours for ISPs that are disaster-related. Designated campus staff will assist Members in identifying and developing ISPs. Designated campus staff will also assist Members with transportation needs and other administrative support. Corps Members who fail to achieve the required hours of ISP service may be subject to having their education awards withheld or pro-rated. Team Leaders are exempt from the 80 hour ISP requirement although encouraged to participate. If a Team Leader chooses to perform ISP hours, he or she 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. These hours may apply to the Presidential or Congressional Service awards.

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, and Members will be in full uniform while performing this service. With approval, Members may complete ISPs during their campus breaks either in their hometown or local community.

## SERVICE-LEARNING AND 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 NCCC's Service Leadership Program. Currently, service-learning and Member development involve several components, including:

### A. In-Processing and Orientation

This occurs during the first week of both Team Leader Training (TLT) and the Corps Training Institute (CTI) for both the NCCC Traditional Program and NCCC-FEMA Corps. 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 the Assistant Program Director for Training (APDT) and approved by the Deputy Region Director for Programming. Training is based on national training competencies as outlined in the Service Leadership Experience and includes sessions on supervisory skills, diversity awareness, project preparation and management, policies and procedures, and management and administration. For NCCC-FEMA Corps, an additional session is offered on NCCC-FEMA Corps and the role of the Team Leader. Full participation in Team Leader Training is required and essential for Team Leaders to be prepared to manage a team of up to 12 Members.

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

CTI is conducted during Corps Members' first several weeks on campus and is coordinated by the APDT and

other campus staff. It is implemented with the full participation of campus 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 NCCC-FEMA Corps, an additional training module is offered that covers NCCC-FEMA Corps Basic topics.

## D. Service Training and 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 campus 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 and Professional Development

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

- Members will 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 their ILP through community service, mini-courses, and other resources with support from training and service-learning staff and in the community where they serve.
- AmeriCorps NCCC expects Members who have yet to obtain a high school diploma or GED to include this goal in the ILP.
- Members will have the opportunity to pursue college credit, 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 campus environment that promotes the whole person concept, a number of campus traditions will be developed. A variety of optional Structured Leisure Activities (SLA) will be coordinated by the campus staff in cooperation with Members.

## MEMBER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

These grievance procedures shall be used when a Member believes that his or her 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.
- To complain about campus 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 campus administration through normal channels established for these purposes.
- To challenge a proposal or decision by the campus administration to transfer, terminate, suspend, fine, 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 NCCC Corps Member, or a Team Leader has a grievance against another NCCC Team Leader, he or she should first try to resolve the matter by requesting a meeting with the other Member and the appropriate Team Leader(s), or a trained counselor mutually agreed upon by both parties, or in cases involving residence hall issues, the Unit Leader or Residence Coordinator, 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 his or her Team Leader, if applicable, to his or her 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 he or she 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 and 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, he or she 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 campus 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 he or she 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 his or her 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.

## C. Grievances against Region Directors

The only grievances that may be brought against a Region Director are those related to the Region Director's personal conduct that is not performed within the scope of his or her official duties. In situations such as these, Members should contact the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC. Decisions made by Region Directors in the course of their official duties may not be grieved, except as discussed above.

# PHYSICAL AND 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 himself or herself;
- precludes participation in the AmeriCorps NCCC program with a reasonable expectation of successful completion; and
- 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; and
- 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. Short Periods of Medical Incapacitation (Unable to Serve)

If a Member is incapacitated for a period of less than 10 days as a result of illness or injury, he or she will not be placed on medical hold and 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, due to an injury or illness, a Member is unable to train or serve for a period of 10 to 30 days, he or she will be placed in a medical hold status. Member is encouraged to provide documentation from the attending physician 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 attending physician. The Member will be informed in writing of the effective date of placement into medical hold. If determined by the Region Director to be to the benefit of the program, Members will be provided travel to their Home of Record.

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 his or her 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 he or she 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 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 attending physician 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 Corporation/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, he or she 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 attending physician. 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, he or she should submit a written request to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC along with a statement from the attending physician 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.



## CONTINUE TO SERVE

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 their own service projects in their communities. Regardless of the path they choose, AmeriCorps NCCC graduates have a unique opportunity to transform their 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 <http://www.americorpsalums.org>.







# MEMBER LIABILITY FOR GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Members will be financially responsible for government property under their 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 his or her 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 his or her 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 Corporation Office of General Counsel, who will then advise the AmeriCorps NCCC Region Director as to the steps that should be taken.

## B. Statements 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

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

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

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

**CTI** - Corps Member Training Institute. This is the training period between Corps Member arrival and Induction; it is a time of preparation and readiness for the months of service ahead.

**Deputy Region Director for Operations** - the NCCC staff member who reports to the Region Director and is responsible for overall day-to-day management of the AmeriCorps NCCC campus and logistical support for campus facilities and equipment, projects, and Members.

**Deputy Region Director for Programming** - the 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 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.

**Headquarters** - the AmeriCorps NCCC staff at the Corporation for National and Community Service office in Washington, D.C.

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

**Member Support Specialist** - the 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 Member personnel, and coordinating travel arrangements for Members.

**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 campus reporting directly to the National Director of AmeriCorps NCCC in Washington, D.C.

**Resource Manager** - the NCCC staff member responsible for campus budget development and execution, financial management policy and implementation, all areas of procurement and contract support related accounting areas, travel management, debit cards, and other resource driven campus operations.

**Spikes** - when a team undertakes a service project that is 50 miles or more away from the campus and requires an overnight stay of one or more nights - usually 6-8 weeks. Approximately 70% of all projects or two to three of the five projects completed by a team are spikes.

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

**Staff on Duty** - two staff members who are "on-call" at all times and can be reached by cell phone. Duty schedules and phone numbers are distributed to all Members and staff.

**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 their team.

**TLT** - Team Leader Training. This the training period between Team Leader arrival and Corps Member arrival, during which Team Leaders are prepared to lead and support 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 NCCC staff member responsible for his or her 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!

250 E St SW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20525  
[nationalservice.gov/nccc](http://nationalservice.gov/nccc)



*Corporation for*  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
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