



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION



Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps State 2019-2020 Member Candidate Fact Sheet

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a federally-funded national service program modeled after the Peace Corps. AmeriCorps allows U.S. citizens to serve their country at home, meet a critical community need, gain professional experience, and earn an education award to pay for school (or pay back loans). There are several different AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps State members provide direct services to the 4-H population. **AmeriCorps positions are temporary service positions, not permanent employment.**

How does AmeriCorps fit in with UGA Cooperative Extension and Georgia 4-H?

Georgia 4-H is part of UGA Extension. As part of the University of Georgia, Extension offers educational programs, assistance, and materials to Georgia Citizens. Georgia 4-H is the youth development arm of UGA Extension and is the recipient of the AmeriCorps State grant. This is the eighth year that Georgia 4-H has been a recipient of the AmeriCorps State grant. Funding comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through the Georgia Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GCSV). This is federal funding, so it is not always available each year.

Legally, AmeriCorps members are not considered employees of the sponsoring agency (UGA), however AmeriCorps members are on the UGA payroll in order to receive the living allowance and are subject to UGA HR policies. Additional details are provided in the Member Service Agreement. There are strict rules about duties and responsibilities of AmeriCorps members versus Georgia 4-H employees. There is additional paperwork related to AmeriCorps that you will need to complete.

What will I do as an AmeriCorps member?

You will provide direct services to youth involved in the Georgia 4-H program. At a minimum, you will provide the following programming: facilitate or co-facilitate in-school educational club meetings, assist with 4-H Project Achievement, and recruit volunteers. Depending on the county where you serve and if you are full-time or half-time, you will also provide the following programming: attend summer camp and other summer activities, assist with/lead judging teams, coordinate community service projects, attend state-wide events, etc.

The main duty of AmeriCorps State members is to provide direct services to youth. You may perform administrative duties directly related to provision of programming, but are not meant to primarily answer the phone or make copies. Everyone helps out in the office environment, but this should not be your primary duty. Members can support fundraising efforts that are related to the direct services they provide, but hours toward fundraising cannot exceed 10% of the total hours.

There are certain things member are not allowed to do while logging service hours, such as engaging in partisan political activities, or engaging in religious instruction. Individuals may exercise their right as private citizens and may participate in these activities on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so. It is important that you fully review of these prohibited activities: https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/acprohibited_activities.pdf. If you have any questions about the prohibited activities, please contact the Program Coordinator.

AmeriCorps Lingo

- **AmeriCorps:** AmeriCorps is pronounced like the Marine Corps. It is not pronounced “AmeriCorpse.”
- **Service:** AmeriCorps members are not legally considered employees of the organization where they serve. We do not use the word “work” to describe what you do. We use the word **service**. AmeriCorps State members serve with Georgia 4-H.
- **Term of Service:** This refers to the time period members serve. The time period is outlined in the Member Agreement. Some organizations may have terms of service that are different lengths of time. The Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps State program year or term of service is 12 months. Specifically, September 1 – August 31. Individuals can serve a total of 4 terms as an AmeriCorps State member. In some cases, your term may be shorter than 12 months but you must finish your term by August 31.
- **Living Allowance:** Members receive a monthly living allowance or stipend, not a paycheck or salary. This amount is the same every month. Members receive this at the end of the month. UGA requires that this payment is delivered by direct deposit into an account of your choice.

Member Requirements

- **National Service Criminal History Check:** To serve as an AmeriCorps member, you must complete and pass three criminal history checks (see below). **You cannot start until all three of these have cleared.** There is no cost to you for these checks.
 - **UGA Criminal History Check:** Should you be offered the position and you accept, you will be sent an email from UGA’s background check vendor to enter your personal information to initiate the background check. It is important that you check your email daily after being offered the position, including your spam or junk folder. Failure to respond to this email will significantly delay your start time. You must also fill out and sign a form that must be faxed to the background check vendor. Your site supervisor can help you get this form faxed. This check is required by UGA.
 - **FBI Fingerprint-based check:** This is completed through a vendor – Fieldprint – NOT at your local law enforcement agency. Your site supervisor and the Program Coordinator will provide written directions for this process. You will set-up an appointment online at a local vendor (UPS store or similar) and provide your fingerprints in person. This check is required by CNCS.
 - **National Sex Offender Registry Check (NSOPW) & State Checks:** This is completed through a vendor called Truescreen. The Program Coordinator will order this screen. You will receive an email from Truescreen with directions to do the following: enter your personal information and upload a copy of your government-issued ID (i.e. driver’s license). The state check covered the state where you will serve (Georgia) and

your current state of residence (if you currently live outside of Georgia). You may also have to upload a signed form as well. This check is required by CNCS.

- **Pre-enrollment in My AmeriCorps Portal:** The My AmeriCorps portal is an online system that enrolls you in the AmeriCorps system. This is how they verify your citizenship, how you request loan forbearance, and where you will access your education award upon successful completion of your term. Before starting your term, you will create a My AmeriCorps account, develop an application for the position, and formally apply for the position. **There are several back and forth steps to officially enroll you, so it is important that you start this process as soon as you are offered the position.** Your site supervisor and the Program Coordinator will provide you with written directions.
- **Hour Requirement:** Full-time members are required to log 1,700 hours and half-time members are required to log 900 hours to successfully complete their term, be eligible for the education award, and to qualify to serve additional terms of service. Full-time members starting September 1 are required to serve 35-40 hours per week; half-time members serve 20 hours/week. If you get behind one month, you need to make it up the next month. If you start after September 1, you will need to log extra hours to catch up, ensuring you meet your required hours by August 31.

Member Benefits: Some member benefits are available to all members; some are based on eligibility. See the links below for more details.

- **Living Allowance:** The monthly living allowance for full-time members is \$1,166.66 and \$583.33 for half-time members. The living allowance is taxed, so these are the amounts before taxes are taken out. In order to receive the monthly living allowance, you must serve actively. Serve actively is defined as logging 35-40 hours/week for full-time and 17-20 hours for half-time. You receive the same amount per month no matter what day you start or end your service.
- **Segal Education Award:** Members who complete the required hours will receive an education award equal to the Pell Grant (full-time = \$6,095 (1.0 value); half-time = \$3,047.50 (0.5 value) - accurate as of 10/1/2018). The education award can be used to pay for tuition at qualifying education institutions (Title IV schools) or to pay back qualified student loans (loan backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act [except PLUS Loans to parents of students] or under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Health Service Act, or loans made by a state agency, including state institutions of higher education). Individuals can earn the total value of 2.0 education awards total. For more information: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/segal-amicorps-education-award>
 - **It is the candidate's responsibility to determine if their school or loan institution accepts their education award.** The National Service Hotline can assist with this - 1-800-942-2677. The Program Coordinator can also assist you if requested.
 - In some cases, you can use the education award at other institutions (those that accept the GI Bill, Enrichment Classes, Outdoor and International Education, Overseas Schools, Trade Schools). For more information visit this site and look under the heading Types of Schools - <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/ed-award/school>
 - You will not receive an education award if you do not finish your required hours. You will not even receive a partial education award. **The education award is taxed when you use it.** The year you use any of your award you will receive a 1099 from CNCS.

- Individuals aged 55 or over at the start of service can transfer the education award to a child or grandchild. This is the only circumstance in which the award can be used by someone other than the AmeriCorps member that received it. For more information - <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/alumni-resources/transfer-your-education-award>
- **Health Insurance:** All full-time members (and half-time members serving a 6-month term) are eligible for health insurance through AmeriCorps. Health Insurance is provided by CIGNA through an insurance broker. This includes health insurance, vision, and dental. **This is provided at no-cost to the member.** All members that choose not to enroll in health insurance must sign a waiver stating they are already covered by another plan. Members can enroll in insurance at any time during their term of service.
- **Childcare:** Full-time members are eligible for childcare assistance. This benefit is available based on income eligibility. For more information: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/main-menu/2013/americorps-child-care-eligibility-overview>
- **Loan Forbearance:** This means you may be eligible to stop making payments on current loans during your term of service. Interest will still accrue on your loans. CNCS may pay the interest after the loan is out of forbearance. For more information: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-american-corps-education-award/using-your-segal-education-award/postponing>

What am I committing to?

By serving as an AmeriCorps State member with Georgia 4-H, you are making a good faith commitment to serve your full term of service and to complete your required service hours. By serving as an AmeriCorps member, you will gain valuable skills and experience that will assist you with your future career goals. We ask that you be open to personal and professional growth and that you follow through with your commitment to serving Georgia 4-H and successfully completing your AmeriCorps term of service.

By signing below, I indicate that I understand the information above and have addressed any questions to my site supervisor and/or the Program Coordinator.

 *Candidate Signature, Date

 Site Supervisor Signature, Date

NOTE:

- All interview candidates should review this Fact Sheet prior to their interview.
- *Any candidate offered the AmeriCorps position must sign off at the bottom that they have read and understand the information on this Fact Sheet before an Offer Letter is given.
- Any candidate selected by the site supervisor for this position must participate in a brief phone interview with the Program Coordinator.