



AmeriCorps



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION



2023 – 2024 Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps State Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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1. What is AmeriCorps?

A federally funded national service program modeled after the Peace Corps that 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 tuition or to pay back federal student loans.

2. What will I do as an AmeriCorps member?

AmeriCorps State members provide direct service to the people served by the organization with the AmeriCorps grant. If you serve with Georgia 4-H, you will provide positive youth development programming to 4-Hers (youth in grades 4-12). At a minimum, you will teach 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 assist with judging teams, coordinate community service projects, attend state-wide events, coordinate summer activities, and attend summer camp.

3. Do AmeriCorps Members get paid?

Yes, AmeriCorps State members receive a monthly living allowance. It is not a salary or an hourly wage and is the same amount each month. For the 2023-2024 term of service, our full-time members will receive \$1,809 per month and half-time members \$904.50. It is important to know that this is the amount before taxes. AmeriCorps requires that FICA (7.65%) and state and federal taxes are withheld.

“This position has truly set me up on a positive path for my future. It has given me an insight into the classroom that many of my collegiate peers have not had the chance to do. I can apply what I learned in the classroom to my club meetings because I am teaching students on a consistent basis. The relationship with my students and the knowledge I have gained from being an AmeriCorps member is more valuable than any monetary value.”



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4. How do I apply?

Ultimately everyone must apply through UGA's employment system (www.ugajobsearch.com) and the My AmeriCorps portal (<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do>). To find out more information, individuals can fill out our Interest Form - <https://forms.gle/MZnogEumGeHH5LUZ7>

5. What benefits do AmeriCorps members get?

Members receive a monthly living allowance, an education award, and are eligible for loan forbearance. This means, if you are required to pay on a student loan, you can request to stop paying while serving. The interest will still accrue, but AmeriCorps will pay the interest if you finish your term. Full-time members are eligible for free health insurance and to apply for childcare assistance. The childcare assistance is income-based, but the monthly living allowance does not count as income. The living allowance is not counted as income, so that can help members be eligible for state benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Programs such as food stamps (SNAP) and WIC (women, infants and children).

6. Do I have to have a background check or a drug screen to serve as an AmeriCorps member?

To serve, individuals must pass a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC). The NSCHC includes - a state check (state of residence and state of service), a National Sex Offender Registry (NSOPW) check, and an FBI fingerprint-based check. To serve with Georgia 4-H, a UGA background check is also required. The background checks are free of charge and must be completed and passed before someone can start serving. UGA and Georgia 4-H do not require a drug screen to serve.

7. Will I get health insurance?

Full-time AmeriCorps State members are eligible for free health insurance through AmeriCorps. Members do not pay the monthly premium but do pay co-pays and have a deductible. That means, you are not charged anything until you use the insurance for a medical bill. You don't have to pay out of pocket to have the insurance coverage itself.

"The most rewarding thing is serving the youth. I love when a student finds their "thing." A lot of kids that come to 4-H are not the most popular kids in school or great at sports, but since we have started new clubs based on the interests of students, many come back again and again with smiles and want to do more!"

8. What is the AmeriCorps Education Award and how does it work?

Members that serve the full term and meet their hour requirement earn an education award equal to the Pell Grant. The money is transferred into the My AmeriCorps portal account at the end of the term. It can be used to pay current educational expenses at Title IV schools or to pay back qualified student loans. You can find details here -

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/segal-ameriCorps-education-award>.

This year, the full-time education award is \$6,895 and half-time is \$3,447.50. You have seven years to use your award. If you are age 55 or older when you start your term, you can transfer your education award to a child or grandchild, then they have 10 years to use it. If you don't finish your hours, you do not earn an award - not even a partial award.

9. How many education awards can I get?

Individuals can earn the total value of 2.0 education awards. A full-time education award has a value of 1.0. A half-time member's education award has a value of 0.5. Currently the 1.0 value is \$6,895 (what a full-time member receives) and the 0.5 value is \$3,447.50 (what a half-time member receives).

10. What is a Title IV School?

Title IV schools are higher educational institutions, both domestic and foreign, that currently participate in the Department of Education's Title IV student aid programs. You can download a list of Title IV Schools here - <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/resource-type/Federal%20School%20Code%20Lists>

11. What is a qualified student loan?

A loan that is 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.

"I would serve another term if I could. I have accepted a job within Extension and my AmeriCorps experience made that happen. My AmeriCorps service has been more than learning skills, my terms have taught me that our AmeriCorps team is like family! This family has left an impression on me that I will take with me to the next chapter."

12. Is there anything AmeriCorps members are not allowed to do?

AmeriCorps members are not allowed to perform primarily administrative activities, engage in certain types of fundraising, or to do any of the prohibited activities as defined by AmeriCorps. Some administrative duties are allowed as they relate to programming (i.e. make copies of your lesson plans) but members should not be regularly assigned to answer the phone or similar activities. Members can support fundraising efforts that are related to the direct services they provide, but hours toward fundraising cannot exceed 10% of their total hours.

The prohibited activities are things that by law, members are not allowed to do while logging service hours. The list can be found here - <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/2520.65>. In addition, members cannot be involved with any Census activities. (promotion, education, being a Census taker, etc.). Members are also not allowed to be involved in election or polling activities. Members can do these things as a citizen on their own time, but not while logging service hours, wearing AmeriCorps service gear, or representing AmeriCorps.

13. How do you pronounce AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is pronounced like the Marine Corps. It is not pronounced "AmeriCorpse."

14. What is a term of service?

This refers to the period that members serve. The service term varies by organization. The Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps State term of service is 12 months (September 1 – August 31). Individuals can serve a total of 4 terms as an AmeriCorps State member.



15. What is Georgia 4-H and where does AmeriCorps fit?

Georgia 4-H is part of UGA Cooperative Extension which falls under the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the UGA. Extension offers educational programs, assistance, and materials to Georgia Citizens in the areas of family and consumer sciences, agricultural and natural resources, and youth development. Georgia 4-H is the youth development arm and is the recipient of the AmeriCorps State grant. AmeriCorps members that serve with Georgia 4-H are not employees, but they are covered by UGA's worker's compensation (meaning, you can receive medical care if you get injured while serving), general liability insurance, and must follow all UGA policies and procedures.

At the end of the 2021-2022 program year, 100% of AmeriCorps members surveyed agreed that as a result of their service with Georgia 4-H, they were better prepared for future employment, gained skills and experience to use for future employment, and had opportunities to establish connections with other members and a broader National Service Network to build a sense of team spirit.