CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
AmeriCorps NCCC Program Specific Questions
Last update 4/20/20

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

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

1. How is NCCC ensuring the safety of AmeriCorps NCCC members?
AmeriCorps NCCC is committed to protecting the health and safety of AmeriCorps NCCC staff and members. AmeriCorps NCCC will suspend all active NCCC members through May 18, 2020, during which they will continue to receive their living allowance and health benefits. AmeriCorps NCCC staff will coordinate with members to arrange travel for members to their Home of Record. Staff will also be contacting AmeriCorps NCCC members with additional information about the suspension and travel. [updated 3/18]

2. I am an incoming NCCC member and am concerned about potential exposure to the coronavirus if I travel to the campus by air.
The safety and security of members is our highest priority. We are closely monitoring guidance regarding COVID-19 in order to share information in a timely manner and are implementing recommended safety precautions. Typically, travel arrangements are made two to four weeks before the travel occurs. Depending on the circumstances at that time, NCCC will make appropriate travel arrangements for members. If programmatic changes become necessary, incoming members will be notified. [updated 3/12]

3. NCCC has graduation events scheduled in March 2020 and May 2020. Are these events going to occur?
NCCC cancelled all graduation events through May 15. NCCC is closely monitoring the situation in locations where graduation events are scheduled for after May 15.-NCCC graduations will be live-streamed on Facebook to allow members to share their accomplishments with family and friends. Please continue to monitor the CNCS website and NCCC communications for updates. [updated 3/16]

4. NCCC was scheduled to have a new class of FEMA Corps members begin service in Vicksburg, MS, on March 16, 2020. How has Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) impacted that class?
Based on current developments and out of an abundance of caution, AmeriCorps NCCC made the difficult decision to postpone the start of this class. Incoming Vicksburg NCCC FEMA Corps members are in an emergency leave status through May 18, 2020. This is consistent with the decision to suspend active corps
members through May 18, 2020. While on emergency leave, incoming FEMA Corps members will receive their living allowance and health benefits. NCCC staff contacted individuals impacted by this decision to modify travel arrangements. [updated 3/20]

5. Will AmeriCorps NCCC change service hour requirements, or the service end date, in light of members’ being suspended and put on emergency leave due to COVID-19?
AmeriCorps NCCC is working to minimize the impact and disruption on our members to the greatest extent possible. AmeriCorps NCCC is exploring all options within our existing legal authorities on issues related to service hour requirements and the service end date. AmeriCorps NCCC will share more information as soon as we are able. [updated 4/20]

6. Are AmeriCorps NCCC members allowed to have other jobs while suspended on emergency leave?
No. The Member Handbook prohibits members from holding employment while serving in NCCC. [updated 3/20]

7. Can AmeriCorps NCCC members earn ISP service hours while suspended on emergency leave?
No, members cannot earn ISP hours while on emergency leave. [updated 3/20]

8. Are AmeriCorps NCCC members who are suspended on emergency leave required to abide by all NCCC rules and policies?
Yes, all NCCC rules and policies still apply because the status as a NCCC member has not changed. Members who engage in prohibited activities such as illegal drug use are subject to disciplinary action. [updated 3/20]

9. If I graduate from NCCC and do not have a job, does that qualify me for unemployment benefits?
No. The loss of a living allowance at the end of the AmeriCorps NCCC program does not constitute a basis for claiming unemployment compensation. [updated 3/25]

10. I am suspended on emergency leave status. Does that qualify me for unemployment benefits?
Placement on emergency leave is still an active member status and does not constitute a basis for claiming unemployment compensation. [updated 3/25]

11. The AmeriCorps NCCC program is currently suspended. Will future application deadlines be extended? Does AmeriCorps NCCC expect to cancel any future classes?
AmeriCorps NCCC has extended the summer class application deadline. There are no other changes to upcoming classes at this time. [updated 4/7]

12. As part of my AmeriCorps NCCC application, I must submit fingerprints. How can I get my fingerprints done if I am unable to get to a fingerprinting location?
If you run into difficulty getting fingerprints, please contact your Selection and Placement assistant or email ANCCC@cns.gov to discuss options. [updated 3/25]

13. Does AmeriCorps NCCC anticipate that project sponsors will need to meet any additional health and/or safety measures related to COVID-19 when teams resume work?
Project sponsors will be expected to follow national, state, and local health and safety guidelines at the time teams are able to resume service. The health and safety of NCCC members remains our highest priority. Specific questions regarding social distancing, personal protective equipment, or other health and safety
guidelines related to AmeriCorps NCCC projects should be directed to regional AmeriCorps NCCC staff. [updated 4/2]

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

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

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

For AmeriCorps NCCC, if your graduation date was advanced and you were exited from the program earlier than planned due to COVID-19, the Trust will pay 100 percent of the interest that accrued on your qualified student loan for 1,700 hours of service. If you decided to exit the AmeriCorps NCCC program early and your exit was a resignation from the program, you are not eligible to have the Trust pay the interest that accrued. [updated 4/8]

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. AmeriCorps NCCC members who have served more than 50 percent of their term of service at time of exit: AmeriCorps NCCC members who have completed more than 50 percent of their term of service (i.e., at least 850 hours) may be eligible to receive the full education award amount with a CPC exit related to COVID-19. See CARES Act, § 3514.

[updated 4/17]

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

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