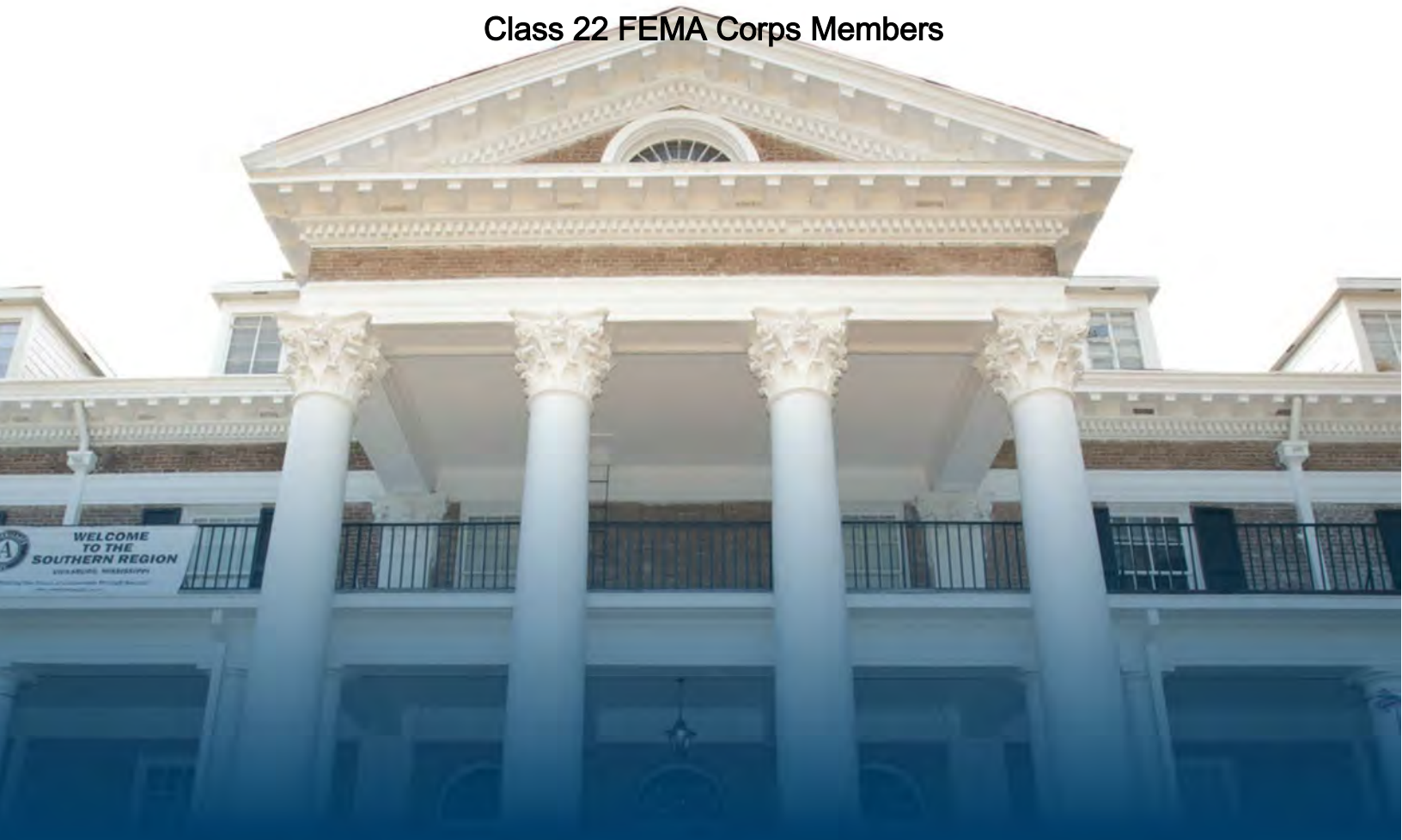
AmeriCorps NCCC FEMA Corps

Class 22 FEMA Corps Members



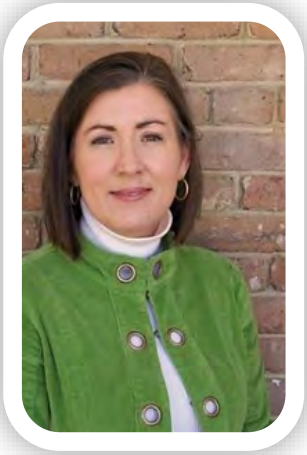
From all of us here at the AmeriCorps NCCC Southern Region Campus,

Welcome.

FEMA Corps

Please read all contents within this packet carefully, as it contains information critical to your success as a service member in the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps.

The forms located at the end of this packet must be filled out and submitted in order to secure placement in this program.



Dear FEMA Corps Member,

Welcome to Vicksburg, Mississippi, home of the Southern Region Campus! Congratulations on your selection as an NCCC FEMA Corps Member. On behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), thank you for your commitment to serve our country through the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and FEMA.

As you know, FEMA Corps is the result of an exciting new partnership between CNCS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that started in 2012. You begin this year as the fifth class of the NCCC FEMA Corps Member. This is a great new opportunity. Thank you for embracing it. We are thrilled to have you on board, and our staff looks forward to working with you to accomplish our mission of strengthening communities and developing leaders.

This Corps Member Welcome Packet is a repository of information referencing things you need to know. It is a "living document" that will grow and change as we expand our knowledge, deepen our relationships and explore new service opportunities in the Southern Region. We solicit your input to ensure that this packet is relevant, correct and useful.

Although your Team Leader is your primary source of information and support, every member of our staff is here to support you.

I'm committed to ensuring your individual success and the success of our organization. Your experience with AmeriCorps NCCC/FEMA will be exciting, challenging, and rewarding. Again, thank you for joining NCCC FEMA Corps. I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Kathy Hopson-Ricks

Kathy Hopson-Ricks,
Region Director
AmeriCorps NCCC Southern Region

Welcome to the Southern Region!

The staff at the Southern Region is extremely excited to join you as you embark on this journey into service. You will find that this packet is full of helpful information that can help you prepare for your upcoming adventure. In the following pages you will find answers to many of the questions you may already have as well as other important items you may not have considered. For this reason, it is important that you read through this packet very carefully.

This packet includes several documents that you MUST return within 10 business days in order to secure your place in our newest class of AmeriCorps NCCC.

As you are preparing for your time of service in the Southern Region, I encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns that may arise. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

Included in this welcome packet are several forms that you must complete and return IMMEDIATELY. Please read through all of the information in this packet regarding medical benefits and in-processing prior to completing the forms.

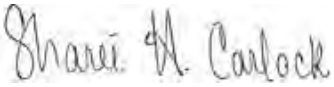
Please return the following **COMPLETED DOCUMENTATION** to me within the next 10 business days:

- Transportation Selection Form **(this is critical as it secures your place in the Southern Region)**
- General Consent
- Emergency Contact Information
- Consent for Release of Information
- Online Member Profile Form
- Other Health Coverage Questionnaire

For your convenience, you may contact our office via telephone (601-630-4056), email (SouthernRegion@cns.gov), or by fax (601-630-4071).

The Southern Region staff is looking forward to an exciting 10 months with you as a part of our newest Corps!

Sincerely,



Sharee Carlock, Member Support Specialist

ABOUT

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women age 18–24. AmeriCorps NCCC requires an intensive, 10-month commitment. Members serve in teams of eight to twelve and are assigned to projects throughout the region served by their campus. They are trained in CPR, first aid, public safety, and other skills before beginning their first service project. Members are assigned to one of five campuses, located in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Baltimore, Maryland; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and, Vinton, Iowa.

Drawn from the successful models of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the U.S. military, AmeriCorps NCCC is built on the belief that civic responsibility is an inherent duty of all citizens and that national service programs work effectively with local communities to address pressing needs.

FEMA Corps, part of AmeriCorps NCCC, is the result of a partnership between the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency that establishes a new track of up to 1,600 FEMA Corps Members within NCCC dedicated to disaster response and recovery. Just like current AmeriCorps NCCC Team Leaders, FEMA Corps Team Leaders serve a 11 month term and are eligible to serve a second year based on their performance. Also like NCCC, FEMA Corps is a full-time, team-based residential service program for men and women age 18–24 operated in the same campus structure as NCCC (traditional program). FEMA Corps Members are assigned to one of five NCCC campuses.

FEMA Corps members will solely focus on disaster response and recovery activities, within the United States for the full 10 months of their service term. Members will be dedicated to FEMA deployments in areas of logistics, community relations, individual and public assistance and recovery. They will provide support in areas ranging from working directly with disaster survivors to supporting disaster-recovery centers to sharing mitigation information with the public.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is an independent federal agency. The Corporation has a Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Corporation is the nation's largest grant maker supporting service and volunteering. Through its Senior Corps and AmeriCorps programs, it provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to express their patriotism while addressing critical community needs.

safer

WATCH | AmeriCorps Turns 20

healthier

Mission

The mission of AmeriCorps NCCC is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

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.

Getting things done.

An important aspect of the AmeriCorps pledge is “getting things done for America” and we take it very seriously. Your commitment to 10 months of service is noble; however, there are both challenging and rewarding times ahead.

You may be working in large cities or small rural communities that have been devastated by a natural disaster. Assisting those affected into safe housing, ensuring that thousands of people get food and water, and aiding community members with completing forms is valuable and rewarding work. If roads, bridges, and other public facilities are damaged, you may begin the process for their repair, but you may not see the project completed within your term of service. It takes years for communities to recover completely. In addition, you may encounter complex political and social issues that oftentimes cannot be solved by a team of dedicated national service members.

Thinking about these large problems can feel overwhelming. However, by dedicating 10 months to national service, you have provided a solution for the first part of this problem – community involvement. During your time in this program your work will make a real difference, and those who benefit will not forget what you did for them. We may have a long way to go, but the way to get there is through learning, understanding, and evaluating some of these hard issues. NCCC strives to build a community of critically minded thinkers who do not simply get things done, but, more importantly, get things done thoughtfully through actions.

A Commitment to Service.

The NCCC program is an entity of the public trust. It is paid for entirely through taxpayers' money. Consequently, our objective is to always carry ourselves in a manner that warrants the respect, trust, confidence, and resources the people of this country have invested in us. The NCCC program is structured and requires professionalism. Like any job, it has policies and standards for its participants and its employees. Before accepting the position offered to you, please evaluate and be certain of your willingness to comply with set standards, rules, and living conditions. If you change your mind about participating, please notify the campus immediately so that another applicant may be offered your position.

If you do accept the challenge to join us, please know that community service is challenging. We all know that our country has issues that need to be addressed. We want you to think of your 10 months with NCCC as a commitment that you have made to serve the communities of this nation; to be fully engaged and to see the program through to its end; to be a part of the solution to some of our nation's most challenging problems; to put others ahead of your personal needs. Through your service you will make a real difference in the communities that build our country; it will be an experience you will never forget, and will change your life from this point forward.

Every year, millions of Americans suffer the effects of natural and man-made disaster. FEMA Corps members help FEMA coordinate disaster response activities. Members spend their time in the office and in the field. FEMA Corps has responded to disasters in 29 states since 2012. Members gain professional skills and experience in emergency management.

Getting To Campus

Corps Member

Arrival Date: July 14, 2015

Your transportation to and from the campus at the beginning and end of the program will be arranged and paid for by the campus personnel office. Please complete and sign the **Transportation Selection Form** located in the back of this packet. **If the form is not signed we cannot confirm your spot at the campus**. Return this form to the Member Support Office no later than **10 days after receiving this packet**.

Your contacts for travel related questions:

Sharee Carlock
Member Support Specialist
(601) 630-4056
scarlock@cns.gov

Carrie Ogborn-Smith
Member Support Specialist
(601) 630-4056
cogborn-smith@cns.gov

Air

TRAVEL OPTIONS:

If the trip to our campus is over 50 miles, an airline ticket or train ticket will be purchased for you, unless you choose an alternative form of transportation.

The NCCC campus will purchase the ticket for you and contact you with your travel information. The campus arranges travel in this way so that we may coordinate shuttle pick-ups, and also pay the government rate for the ticket. Please ***DO NOT*** make your own reservations, ***DO NOT*** purchase your own ticket, and ***DO NOT*** attempt to change your reservation.

Your itinerary will be e-mailed to you approximately **two weeks before your arrival date.** You will not receive a paper airline ticket until you check in at the airport on your travel day – you will need to present a valid photo ID at the ticket counter to receive your boarding pass/ticket.
NCCC will reimburse one checked bag under 50 pounds. NCCC is not responsible for extra charges that occur from exceeding checked baggage fees. You **MUST** keep your receipt for reimbursement of baggage fees.

NCCC is not responsible for any additional charges by airlines for exceeding baggage limits/weights, so please check with the airline before heading to the airport.

Air (continued)

Please contact your local airport to inquire about pre-flight arrival to the airport. The general recommendation is to arrive two hours prior to your flight, to allow time for checking in, clearing security, and boarding your plane.

NCCC is not responsible for any additional charges by airlines for exceeding baggage limits/ weights, so please check with the airline before heading to the airport.

Bus or Train

If you choose to arrive via bus you will need to purchase your ticket up front and we will reimburse you once you arrive on campus. You MUST keep your receipt for reimbursement.

If you choose to arrive by train we will purchase your boarding pass and email you an electronic copy. Please be aware that a train ride can last in multiple days depending on your location.

Personal Vehicle

You can choose to drive your personal vehicle to Vicksburg. Please be aware, however, that you cannot drive your vehicle to projects. There is a parking lot on campus where your vehicle can stay while you are away.

The NCCC campus will reimburse you for the mileage you drive from your home of record to the campus at a rate of **$0.56 per mile, up to a maximum of $275**. Mileage will be calculated using the Rand-McNally Road Atlas. Additional travel costs (hotels, etc.) are at your own expense.

If you bring your vehicle you must bring a valid driver's license (one that will not expire while you are here), copy of vehicle registration, a safety inspection sticker (if required by your state) and proof of insurance. If your license expires while serving, your driving privileges will be revoked until it is renewed.

We are not responsible for damage to, or theft of, your vehicle or items contained within it.

If your travel plans cause you to arrive earlier, you will not be allowed to stay on campus until your actual arrival date.

On-campus parking for private vehicles is very limited and you will be asked to move your vehicle to a different, secured location when you deploy on your SPIKE.

Should you experience any complications or personal emergencies that might prevent you from arriving at the time we have scheduled, please call our main number at (601) 630-4040 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Arrival

Thank you in advance for your flexibility! Keep in mind that we must arrange transportation for hundreds of people on the same day which can lead to delays and long wait times. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Travel Hubs

On the day of your arrival, staff and transportation will be available at the following transportation hubs, waiting for you:

Jackson-Evers International Airport - Air travelers will fly into Jackson-Evers International Airport in Jackson, MS and will be met by AmeriCorps NCCC representatives. When you arrive, follow the signs to "Baggage Claim." AmeriCorps NCCC representatives will be waiting. Please check in with a representative before going for your luggage.

Greyhound Bus Station - Please look for AmeriCorps NCCC reps (holding signs) that will be waiting there to pick you up.

Jackson Train Station - Please look for AmeriCorps NCCC reps (holding signs) who will be waiting there to pick you up.

Drivers - Drivers should plan their trip to safely arrive on campus:
CMs – July 14, between 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Upon arriving on campus, check in (follow posted signs).

Travel Timeline

IMMEDIATELY – The deadline to mail, email or fax your Transportation Selection Form to the campus is 10 days after you receive this Welcome Packet. You must complete and return your form on time or you may lose your spot at the campus. **We prefer that you EMAIL your completed Welcome Packet forms to SouthernRegion@cns.gov.**

Approximately two weeks before your scheduled arrival you will receive your travel arrangements and itinerary via e-mail. For you to receive this information in a timely fashion, please make sure that your contact information is up-to-date. Contact the MSS office with any changes at (601) 630-4056 or SouthernRegion@cns.gov.

Within 15 days of arriving – You will receive reimbursement for any travel you paid out of pocket, including reimbursement for mileage driving a personal vehicle (up to $275.00). Additionally, if you must travel more than 50 miles in your personal vehicle to get to the airport, bus, or train station, you will be reimbursed for that as well.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there limits to the personal belongings I can bring?

Limit your checked baggage based upon airline regulations. Check with the specific airline for more guidance, as you will be responsible for any additional costs for exceeding baggage limits/weights. Also note, you will be sharing your room; be considerate. Please see list of recommended items to bring. You will also be spending the majority of your time away from campus. When on SPIKE travel, your team is limited to items that will fit in your van. You will remove all items from your campus dorm room while on SPIKE So, it is vital to not over pack.

Do I need to bring a vehicle?

No. Government vehicles will be provided for your use to successfully carry out your duties in the program.

What about my basic needs? (Housing, food, transportation, etc.)

All of these things are provided for. The program sets up housing in the communities you serve. You receive a food budget of $4.75/day, as well as a living stipend of approx. $160 every two weeks. The program covers transportation from your home to campus as well as from campus to home at the end of your term of service. You will drive a government vehicle to and from your projects.

Corps Members arriving and signing in at Jackson International Airport.

Arrival Day

Example Arrival Day Outline

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Arrival
	Room Key Issue
	Collection of Initial Paperwork
Lunch will be provided	
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Welcome & Campus Tour
7:00 p.m.	Residence Hall Safety Orientation

The Next Few Days: In-Processing

In-processing involves orientation, drug screen, immunization shots, in-processing paperwork, benefits and pay, submission of travel claims for drivers, uniform issue, boot sizing, banking, personnel questions, and much more.

DOCUMENTATION

A Note About Documentation:

For the in-processing of AmeriCorps NCCC, the only documentation that you will need is a STATE ISSUED IDENTIFICATION CARD. This can be a driver's license or a basic State ID. You must have this identification with you when you arrive on campus. If you have a valid driver's license and a clean driving record, you will be expected to drive a government vehicle.

For the purpose of badging and obtaining equipment with FEMA, you will need two forms of identification. The two forms of identification must be valid and at least one of them must be a government-issued photo ID (your driver's license/state issued ID meets this requirement). The other form of identification must be a document that proves your ability to work in the US, such as a US passport or social security card. **You will not be able to participate in the FEMA Corps program without receiving a FEMA badge.**

Required In-Processing Documentation- AmeriCorps NCCC

- A valid (non-expired) driver's license or state issued photo ID
- A state-issued copy of your current driving record (past 3 years)
- Vehicle registration (if you will drive a car to campus)

A Valid Photo ID

To complete your AmeriCorps NCCC in-processing, you must bring valid photo identification: driver's license, passport, or state-issued photo ID.

If your photo ID does not list your date of birth, the following documents are acceptable supplements to your picture ID: a copy of your birth certificate, naturalization certificate, alien registration card, or baptismal certificate (you must still have a photo ID).

Required FEMA Documentation:

1. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations require two (2) forms of identification.

2. Documents must be originals.

3. At least one document must be a valid, unexpired state or federal government-issued picture identification with date of birth listed. A Driver's License is a state government issued photo ID.

4. You cannot present two pieces of ID issued from the same agency (driver's license & state ID)

5. Acceptable Forms of Identification: You must have two original forms of identification from this list. At least one document must be a valid, unexpired state or federal government- issued picture identification with date of birth listed.

When reviewing these documents, FEMA must verify the following items: (1) your identity and (2) your ability to work within the United States.

Documents that prove identity

Passport (will only count once towards your required documents)

Driver's license

State-issued ID

US Military Card or draft record

Military dependent's ID card

Native American tribal document (with picture)

FEMA Corps

Documents that prove your ability to work within the United States:

Passport (will only count once towards your required documents)

Social security card (un-laminated)

Original or certified copy (which is certified by the county, State, or municipal authority and bears an official seal) of your birth certificate.

Certification of Birth Abroad issued by the State Department (Form FS545 of DS- 1350)

US Citizen ID card

Employment authorization document issued by Department of Homeland Security.

Native American Tribal Document

Certificate of US. Citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561)

Certificate of Naturalization (Form N-SSO or N670)

Documentation (continued)

Also, keep in mind that a certified copy is not a copy that has been notarized- it is a copy from the issuing authority that has been certified and bears the official seal.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If you were born outside of the United States, one of your two forms of Identification MUST be one of the following

1. Unexpired U.S. Passport or US. Passport Card
2. Unexpired Retiree Military ID (Sponsor)
3. Certification of Naturalization of Citizenship Documents
4. Certificate of Birth or Certification of Birth Abroad issued by Department of State

Driving Record

Members with valid state driver's licenses are required to bring a current copy of their driving record to campus. Most records can be obtained by calling the registry of motor vehicles in your state. There may be a fee for obtaining this report. NCCC will not reimburse you for this expense. This can often take several weeks to obtain. Please do not procrastinate. When requesting your driving record, ask for your driving history for the past three years. NCCC requires a copy of your driving record for members that will drive government vehicles.

You will be given training in the operation of government owned vehicles. This driver's training is not meant teach you how to operate a standard vehicle or serve as a driver's education program. It is assumed that you will arrive on campus with ample driving experience and knowledge regarding vehicle operation. We will provide you the information and training in order to be able to safely drive one of our government owned 15 passenger vans.

Vehicle Registration

For members who bring their car to campus, for security reasons, we will collect basic information (license plate #, owner information, etc). Members may also be asked to provide the following information:

- A valid driver's license
- Vehicle registration papers
- Proof of insurance
- A safety inspection sticker (if your state requires it)

Health Screening / Drug Policy

Also included as a part of in-processing is a health screening. The health screening takes place within the first week on campus. The health screen involves:

- Vaccination for tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis
- A skin test for tuberculosis (TB). You may bring a copy of your immunization records.
- Drug screening

DRUG FREE

THIS IS A DRUG FREE PROGRAM! ANYONE TESTING POSITIVE FOR AN ILLICIT DRUG DURING THE INITIAL SCREENING WILL BE IMMEDIATELY RELEASED FROM THE PROGRAM!

Corps Members during In-Processing

Corps Life

Your Contact Information

Even though you will be traveling and changing locations on a frequent basis, we strongly encourage you to keep in touch with family and friends.

Staff members will maintain contact with you using the information you entered into the portal or the FEMA provided mobile phones. It is imperative that you update your portal account with your most current contact information.

Mail

You will be provided with mail service in the residence hall. Mail is distributed Monday-Friday. The following will be your address for your service year. Family and friends may address items to you as follows:

YOUR NAME – Class 22 FEMA Corps/Team Name and Number

AmeriCorps NCCC

2715 Confederate Avenue

Vicksburg, MS 39180

It is recommended that you get in the habit of paying your bills online or over the phone. Due to delays in receiving mail from our sorting process, especially when you are on SPIKE, you may not receive bills as quickly as you do at home. Also, due to the size of our organization, the U.S. Postal Service will not forward mail to you from here to your next address at the end of the program, even if you submit a forwarding order. It is also recommended that you do not forward mail via the postal service from your current residence to the address above, as items may get lost or delayed. You will need to call all institutions from which you regularly receive mail and change your address with each of them at the beginning and end of the program.

SPIKE Mail

You will not always be living in the residence hall in Vicksburg. However, you may consider the above address as your mailing address for the full 10 months. Once a week, most of the mail received at the above address will be packaged and sent to you wherever your team is serving, with the exception of magazines and packages. Due to the added cost of reshipping packages we are unable to forward them to your SPIKE location. All mail that is not forwarded to SPIKE sites will be waiting for you in the dorm when you return to Vicksburg for transitions between projects. Medication, eye glasses, or contact lenses may be shipped to your SPIKE location as needed.

Corps Life (continued)

Internet

At this time, wi-fi is not available in the dorm buildings. However, wi-fi is provided in the main administration building. There is also a computer lab with internet access. Please be aware that you will be using a government internet connection and you will not be allowed to hard wire your personal computers to the connections in the computer lab. Attempting to remove a previously connected computer and install a non-network computer could shut down the security port; disciplinary action will occur.

Cell Phones

Personal cell phones are permitted, but you are required to keep them turned off during trainings, work hours, and team meetings.

Emergency

In the event of an emergency you may be contacted through your Team Leader or Unit Leader. These contact numbers will be provided to you upon your arrival. It will be your responsibility to communicate these phone numbers to necessary family members.

Administration

The Southern Region Staff can be reached between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time Monday – Friday at (601) 630-4040.

Selected Staff Contact Information

Wade Williams	Deputy Director of Operations	cwilliams@cns.gov	(601) 630-4042
Kevin Jones	Community Relations Associate	kjones@cns.gov	(601) 630-4048
Justin Fuller	Unit Leader- Ocean	jfuller@cns.gov	(601) 630-4047
Monica Ford	Unit Leader- Bayou	mford@cns.gov	(601) 630-4049
Chris Reed-Waddell	Unit Leader- Summit	creedwaddel1@cns.gov	(601) 630-4044
Rachel Turner	Unit Leader- Gulf	rturner@cns.gov	(601) 630-4065
Joseph Holbrooks	Counselor	jholbrooks@cns.gov	(202) 815-4244
Sharee Carlock	Member Support Specialist	scarlock@cns.gov	(601) 630-4056
Carrie Ogborn-Smith	Member Support Specialist	cogborn-smith@cns.gov	(601) 630-4056

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is “in-processing”?

A: In-processing is a two day-long process that officially enrolls you into the program.

Q: What should I expect when I get to campus?

A: Upon arrival, each member will receive their room assignment, and then be guided to their unit’s check-in area, where they will verify name, social security number, and hand in required documentation. In-processing and orientation will begin the day after arrival. During this time, you will learn more about your insurance, living allowance, educational award, and other vital information. You will also receive your uniform and be given a tour of the administrative building and campus at this time.

Q: What will I do for meals when I arrive on campus?

A: We will have lunch available due to the flexible arrival schedule. If you miss a meal on the first day due to the timing of your travel, other accommodations will be made for you.

Highlights

These are the items you will need to bring with you for arrival day and in-processing:

- A valid (non-expired) driver’s license or state issued photo ID
- A copy of your current state issued driving record (past 3 years)
- Vehicle registration (if you will drive a car to campus)
- You will need to provide additional documentation in order to obtain your FEMA badge.

If you do not wish to have your stipend deposited to your current bank account, you will have the opportunity to sign up for a new account with a local bank.

Members are allowed to bring a car or motorcycle to campus, however we are not responsible, for personally owned vehicles being broken into or stolen from the parking lot. **You should bring your proof of insurance, registration, and a valid driver’s license to campus.**

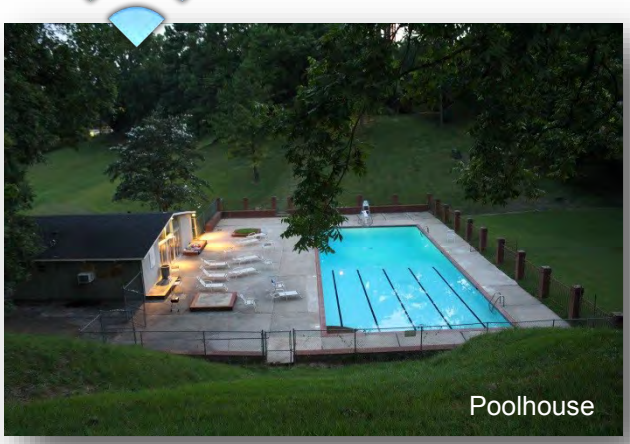
You will undergo a drug screening upon arrival. Random drug testing will occur throughout your year of service. Anyone testing positive on any occasion will be immediately dismissed from the program.

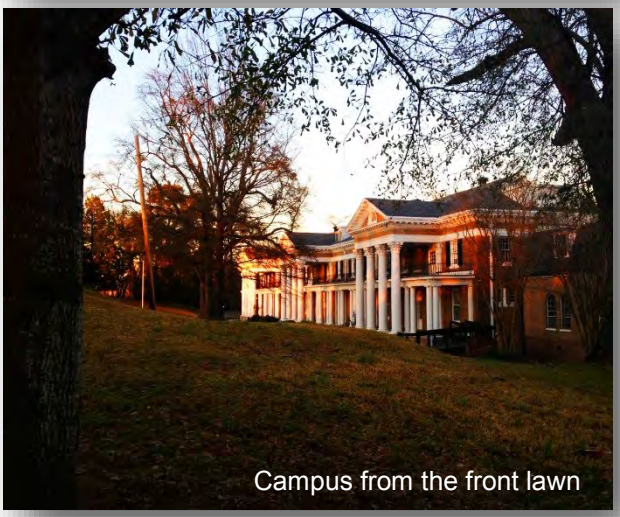
The Southern Region campus is located on the grounds of the All Saints Episcopal School. This historic institution owned by the dioceses of Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Western Louisiana opened its doors in 1908 as an all-girls college. Later, it became a co-educational boarding and day school for students in grades 7-12. In its last year of operation, the school enrolled 124 students, many of whom were international students. The 40-acre campus is home to nine buildings, an administrative and classroom building, five dorms, a chapel and a gym. The property also includes two soccer fields, tennis courts, gymnasium, and an outdoor pool.

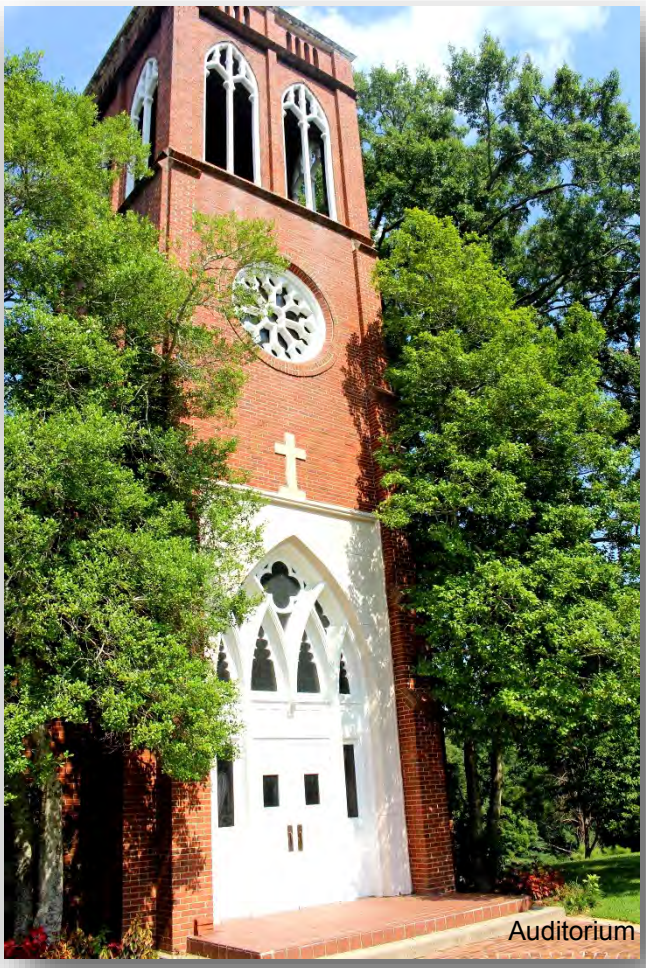
As you walk through the campus, you will find artifacts of the school's history and culture. AmeriCorps NCCC is a federal, secular program. We understand that some members of the Corps may have religious beliefs that differ from those symbolized by some of the decor on the campus. We ask that you respect the campus and its history. AmeriCorps NCCC moved into All Saints in July 2009 to open the fifth NCCC campus in the country.

Campus

Our main building “Green Hall” is equipped with wireless internet.


Poolhouse


Campus from the front lawn

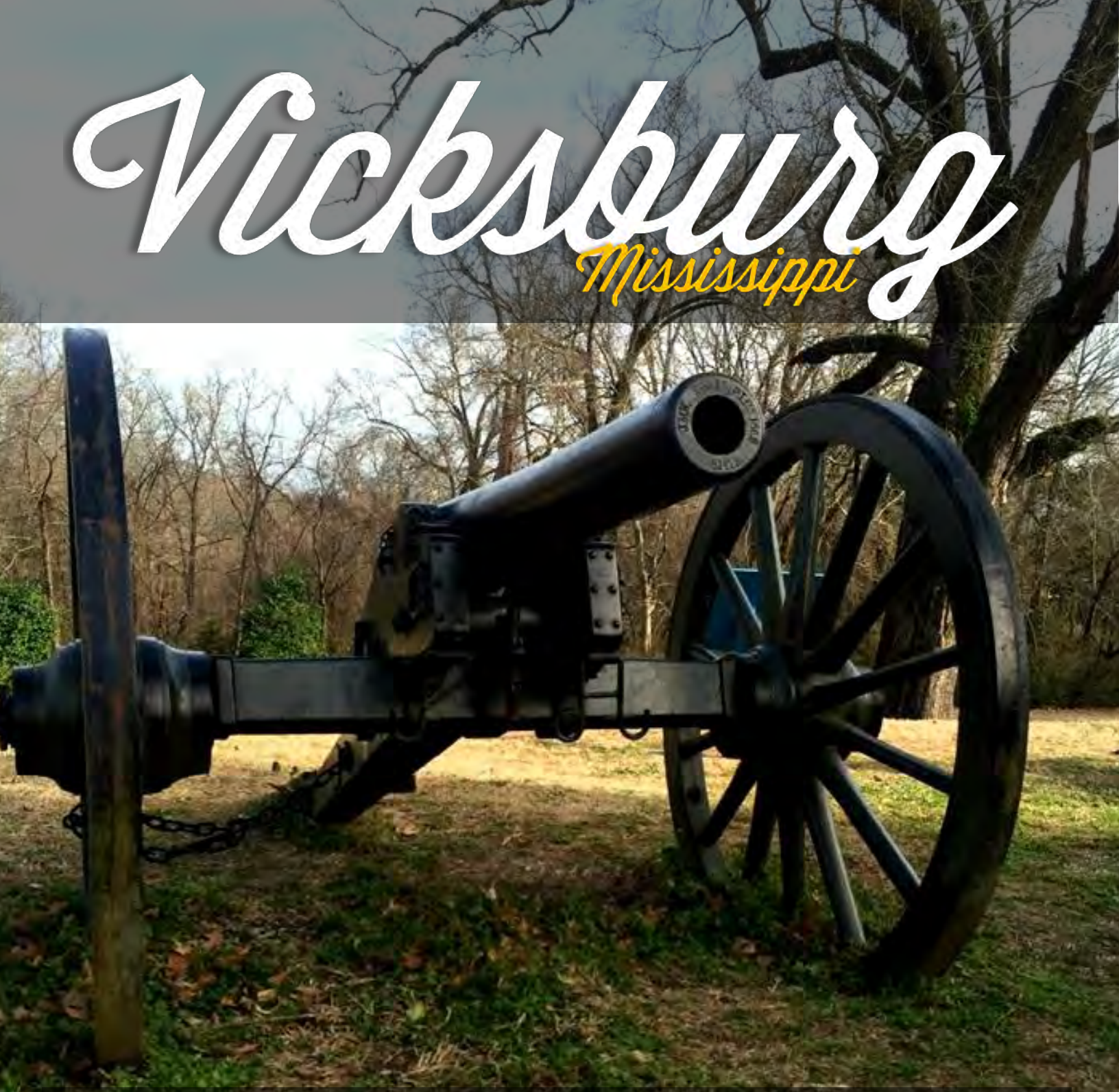

Auditorium

AmeriCorps NCCC occupies and uses the majority of the buildings on the All Saints’ Campus. The NCCC staff offices, training rooms, and computer lab are all located in Green Hall. Corps Members reside in one of four dormitories: St. Ann’s, St. Catherine’s, St. Mary’s and Johnson Halls. The Corps will also have access to the Gymnasium (indoor basketball courts). The grounds also boast soccer fields, tennis courts, outdoor pool, basketball courts, and acres of green space!

Computer Lab

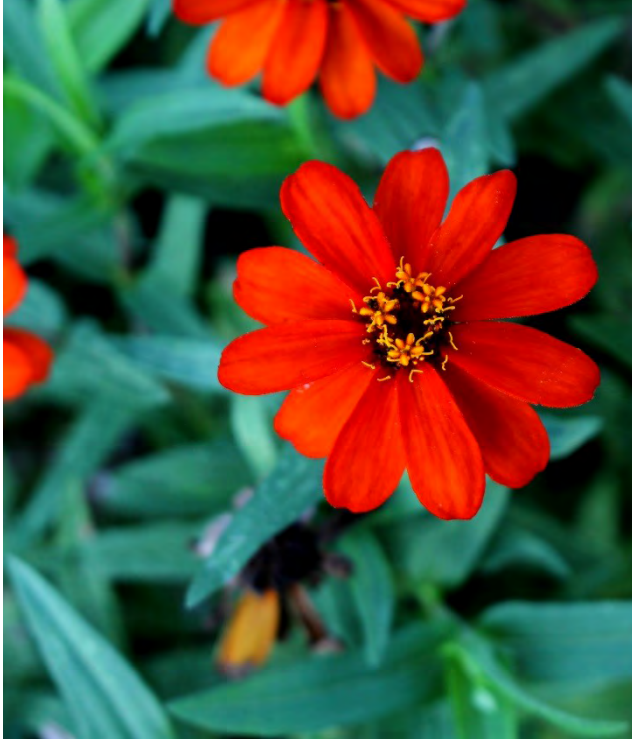
Fooseball in the Pool House

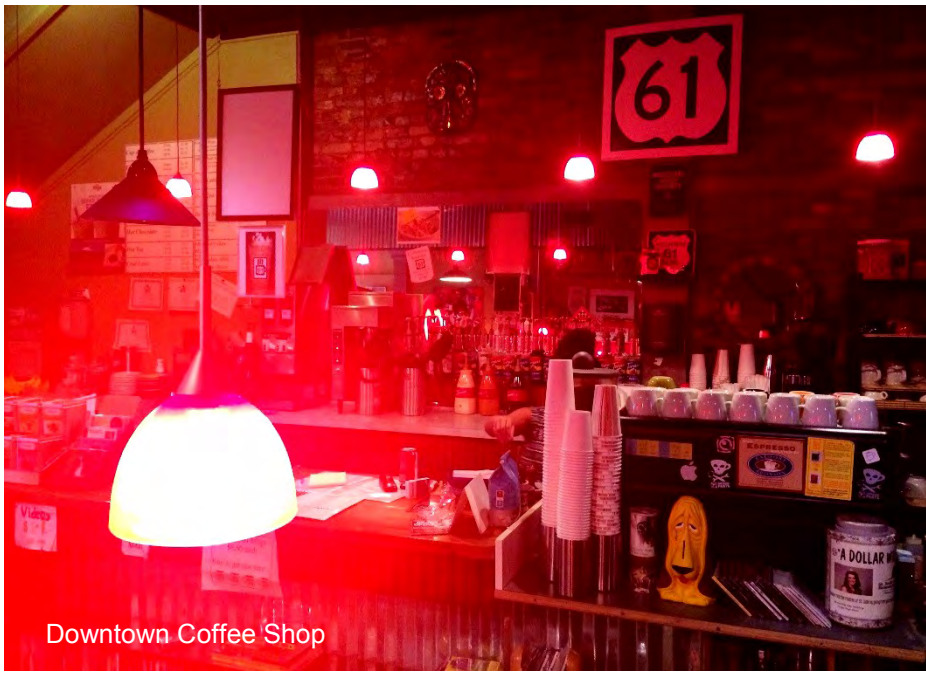
Vicksburg
Mississippi



Vicksburg is a town where people wave even though they don't know you; strangers thank you for the work you do before you've even gotten your team and there's enough history to fill a college textbook on the principles of economics. From the National Military Park to the quaint and quiet downtown, Vicksburg will be a comforting town to live in during CTI and transitions. Vicksburg's a town of honest, hard working, and welcoming Southerners who truly love AmeriCorps NCCC and what it does for the community.

Downtown Bookstore





Downtown Coffee Shop

Local Church

Downtown Art Gallery

Southern Sunset

Campus Lawn

“To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi”

-William Faulkner

The City

Vicksburg is known for its deep history in both Civil War history and Southern Culture. Known as the “Red Carpet City of the South”, Vicksburg is truly a city of Southern hospitality. The city has welcomed AmeriCorps NCCC into the community with open arms and is ready for the corps to arrive!

Vicksburg is the only city in Warren County, with a city population of 26,407 and a county population of 49,644. It sits at the confluence of the Mississippi River and Yazoo River, giving way to breathtaking views from the rivers’ bluffs throughout the city. The area was first settled by the French who built Fort Saint-Pierre in 1719, officially becoming Vicksburg in 1825. The city is named for Newitt Vick, a conscientious objector of the American Revolution.

The city is very proud of its rich history, from the delicately restored antebellum homes to the Vicksburg National Military Park to the Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum where Coca-Cola was first bottled.

It is important to note that Vicksburg is also home to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Vicksburg District whose different centers and stations in the area create one of their largest civil works entities. Essentially, from their facilities in Vicksburg, they manage the Mississippi River from beginning to end and provide critical support to both the military and civilian sector through development of new technology. Established in 1873, they are one of the oldest employers in Vicksburg and are a large part of the community.

Climate

While Mississippi has short mild winters and long, humid summers, members should be prepared to face all weather as the climate varies greatly throughout the region and the greater United States.

Discover the deep history…

Vicksburg National Military Park: This extraordinary park draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The park was established in 1899 to commemorate the siege of Vicksburg and the battle that, along with Gettysburg, ended the Civil War. Throughout the park, there are over 1,300 monuments created by leadings artist of the 1900s.

The Southern Cultural Heritage Complex: This Mississippi landmark takes up an entire city block and is also a nonprofit (Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation) that hosts many humanities, arts and cultural activities. The five buildings, features great architecture, representing times and styles between 1830 and 1955. While restoration is still on-going, some of the space has been beautifully restored. These spaces have been the scene to a few blockbuster movies, including *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* and *Mississippi Burning*.
Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum: Site of the first bottling of Coca-Cola!

Antebellum homes: There are a number of beautifully restored and maintained antebellum homes throughout the city. Many are now bed and breakfasts and/or restaurants. Many also provide tours of the homes, each holding fascinating bits of history dating back to the 1800's.

Enjoy the beautiful outdoors…
Riverfront Park
Catfish Row Art Park
City Park and Pavilion
Vicksburg National Military Park
Natchez Trace Parkway

We can't wait for you to come and enjoy the Southern lifestyle (rocking chair included).

Shopping…
Vicksburg Factory Outlets
Pemberton Square Mall
Downtown shops
Wal-Mart
Walgreens

Eating…
Vicksburg is home to many local and chain restaurants. Below are a few notable local sites:
Highway 61 Coffee House
Café Anchuca
Monsour's at the Biscuit Company
Rowdy's Family Catfish Shack
Goldie's Trail Bar-B-Que
Rusty's
The Tomato Place

Getting Around

While a personal vehicle is convenient, it is not an absolute necessity. During CTI and transition weeks, shuttles will run between campus and nearby locations, including Wal-Mart and other central locations.

You may not use personal vehicles to drive to project work sites.

Residence Halls

You will be assigned a dorm that will serve as your "home base" during your term of service with the Southern Region campus.

The dormitories are co-ed with two to four people living in each room, but each room will be divided by gender. **Roommate assignments are not made until shortly before your arrival on campus, so you will meet your roommate(s) when you get here**. A typical room comes with bunk beds, closet space, drawers and desks. We do not permit the hanging of pictures and posters. The rooms do not have telephone lines or cable.

The dorms are equipped with several other amenities to help make your stay in Vicksburg as comfortable as possible. There are lounges with cable television and outdoor patios for relaxing.

While you are away on SPIKE you will be asked to repack and remove all of your belongings from your dorm rooms. Because the Southern Region has multiple FEMA Corps and traditional AmeriCorps NCCC classes throughout the year, when your class is on SPIKE, another class may be arriving or in training. For this reason, it is imperative that you do not over pack.

Some of our Dorms on Campus.

Communal laundry rooms are available for use in each dorm. Use of the machines are free. You will provide your own laundry detergent.

Dining

While on campus, you will prepare your own meals (except during the first few days upon arrival; meals will be catered). You will be provided money to buy food. There are kitchens in each dorm equipped with plenty of stoves, refrigerators, and cookware. Every member will be issued an individual mess kit to use throughout the year.

As the kitchen areas will be shared with a number of people, a high level of cleanliness and sanitation is expected. These polices will be reviewed during the first few days of training.

While on SPIKE teams will prepare their own food. You may be surprised to learn how talented some of your teammates are in the kitchen. SPIKE food expenses are also provided by NCCC.

Corps Member preparing a meal

Safety & Sanitation

We want to maintain a safe and healthy living environment for all members and Team Leaders. AmeriCorps NCCC members are responsible for maintaining a safe and sanitary residential living environment.

Members are responsible for the cleanliness of their private rooms on a daily basis, and regular room inspections are conducted. Inspections are an overall check for the health, safety, and cleanliness of each room.

Room inspections will be conducted regularly. Some inspections will be announced and some room inspections will be random. Inspections are managed by the Unit Staff and the Residence Coordinator. Unit Staff will manage discipline for failed inspections. Inspections will be completed by a two-person staff team to ensure the security and privacy of personal property.

- Prohibited items include: candles, incense, flammable materials, hot plates, coffee makers, broilers, rice steamers, illegal drugs or any paraphernalia, ashtrays, alcoholic beverages and/or containers
- Fire and/or Safety Hazards include: Extension cords (surge protector type multi-outlet cords are authorized, but there can be no more than one to an outlet), electrical cords, piles of clothing, open, unwrapped food or food containers, electrical appliances such as hair dryers, irons, etc. plugged in when not in use
- No clothes or scarves over lamps
- Nothing can be attached to or hanging from the ceiling

Drug and Alcohol Policy

All residence halls are drug and alcohol-free. Use or possession of alcohol by anyone in the residence halls, SPIKE housing/Project site, in the government vehicle, or work site, regardless of age, will result in appropriate disciplinary action, including possible suspension or dismissal from the program. Alcohol use is permitted if you are at least 21 years of age, not on duty, and if you are away from NCCC property and project sites.

Smoking is not permitted in or near the entrances or windows of any of the buildings or in government vehicles. There is a designated smoking area.

AmeriCorps NCCC has zero tolerance for illegal drug use. You will undergo a drug screening upon arrival as part of a physical exam. Urinalysis drug screening will also occur randomly throughout the 10 months of service. Urinalysis testing and searches of campus facilities can also be done if probable cause exists. Anyone testing positive for illegal drugs will be immediately dismissed from the program. Drugs or drug paraphernalia found in a person's possession will lead to dismissal.

Other Campus Facilities

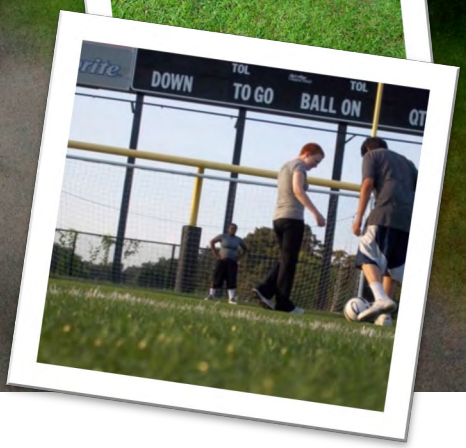
You will have access to the swimming pool, pool house and gym on campus. The gym has a full-size basketball court. This facility will provide your team with easy, nearby options for Physical Training (PT), as well as personal recreation. Hours of operation will be provided upon your arrival. There is also a YMCA nearby that has free admission on Saturdays.

There are numerous outdoor facilities on campus as well, including tennis courts, basketball court, volleyball court, soccer fields and acres of green space!

You will also have access to the computer lab in Green Hall. Hours of operation will be provided upon your arrival.

Physical Fitness

Physical training is an important part of the AmeriCorps NCCC experience. PT will be required three times a week for at least 45 minutes each time. The activities will be determined by teams and facilitated by Team Leaders. Activities could include running, going to a gym, or practicing yoga – there is plenty of room for variety and creativity. The Southern Region campus also challenges members to improve their physical condition during the program by conducting periodic baseline tests. During training members will be timed on a 1.5 mile run and will do as many sit-ups in one minute and push-ups in one minute as they can. The test will be repeated during transition weeks, so members can measure their improvement.



Free Time

If there are not any team or Corps obligations (i.e. working on the project site, team meetings, training sessions, all-Corps events, etc.) unscheduled time is free. There is generally free time after dinner and on weekends. NCCC Members will be expected to adhere to all community rules and regulations. During free time many Corps Members like to go into Vicksburg and walk around downtown or hang out at Highway 61 Coffeehouse.

Security and Visitors

Your safety is of utmost important to us. Each night there will be a Team Leader on call. A security officer will be on duty, roaming the campus during the evenings. The front doors of the dormitories require a security code that is only issued to Corps Members, Team Leaders, and NCCC staff.

Guests should be accompanied by NCCC members when in the dorm rooms. Guests may not stay overnight in the residence halls, however, there are many hotels/motels near the campus where family or friends can stay. All visits must be worked around your work schedule.

Out of the office.

During your term of service, you will have the opportunity to reach out to other organizations for Independent Service Projects (ISP's) during your free time. This gives you the opportunity to work with many different organizations tackling a variety of needs.

"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

-MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Benefits

Living Allowance

Corps Members receive their living allowance every two weeks. The allowance is approximately $160.00 after federal taxes are withheld. Allowances cover a 14-day period and are paid 10 days after the end of the pay period for which the allowance is earned. The allowance is electronically deposited into your personal bank account. **Direct deposit is mandatory.**

You will receive a complete schedule of allowance pay dates during in-processing. Your personal finances are your responsibility. If there is a payroll error, it is your responsibility to keep track of your allowances and balance, and to work with your bank and NCCC staff to resolve the situation.

Banking

All AmeriCorps NCCC members are required to have a direct deposit account in order to receive their living allowance every two weeks. Funds are automatically deposited into your account on designated dates; you will receive a schedule of these dates when you arrive on campus. Members may access their funds through automatic teller machines, bank cards, check writing, or other banking services, i.e. teller services.

If you currently have a checking account and elect to have your funds deposited into that account, **please log in to the My AmeriCorps Portal (under living allowance you will see "Direct Deposit Information") and enter your bank account information. You will need to enter submit your account number and routing number so that your living allowance may be directly deposited into your account.** Please be sure that you are entering your account number and not the number on your debit/credit card.

If you do not presently have a checking account or desire to establish a new account once you arrive on the campus, there will be banking representatives on campus during in-processing. This service is offered as a convenience. You are not required to use this banking institution, but you must have a direct deposit account in order to receive your living allowance.

Please be advised that failure to enter direct deposit information could delay your living allowance by up to six weeks.

For those arriving on campus July 14th, your first allowance will be received on 7/31/2015. This allowance will be for 12 days.

Your first full living allowance will be received on 8/15/2015 for 14 days.

Please make special note of the above dates and plan accordingly for your first month in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Limited Health Benefits

As a Corps Member, you are entitled to limited health care benefit designed by the Corporation for National and Community Service and administered by Seven Corners, Inc. The AmeriCorps healthcare plan provides you with 24-hour health care coverage automatically on day of arrival. Your health care benefits will automatically terminate at midnight on the date you exit the program.

Only you are covered under the AmeriCorps health benefit – no dependents are covered. Coverage includes payment for most medical and surgical costs, hospitalization, prescription drugs, emergency dental and emergency vision and mental health. Pre-existing medical conditions are not covered.

The AmeriCorps health benefit provides a prescription drug program in combination with your health care benefits. Catamaran will be your prescription drug plan administrator. The Catamaran network includes over 60,000 pharmacy locations nationwide. Your AmeriCorps NCCC identification card also serves as your prescription drug card. While pre-existing conditions are not covered, your pre-existing prescriptions may be covered.

More detailed information including your Member Health Care Guide and Health Care Card will be provided during Corps Training Institute (CTI). **However, we strongly encourage you to visit www.americorps.sevencorners.com prior to your arrival.**

At this website you may view the Member Health Care Guide which outlines your benefits and how to use them. Once you have gone to the website, click on the Forms link on the left-hand side then choose the Member Health Care Guide option. You may also find further information on your health benefits in the AmeriCorps NCCC Member Handbook **(which cannot be shared)**.

It is important to note that there are exclusions to your covered benefits.

Benefits are not paid for pre-existing conditions. A pre-existing condition is any condition or illness for which medical treatment was given, or a diagnosis was made, on or before the effective date of coverage. Please visit the website to get complete information on the exclusions.

Education Award

After Corps Members complete the full 10 months and 1,700 hours of service, they will receive an Education Award of at least $5,730.00. This award may be applied to future schooling tuition, or to existing qualified student loans. Additional information on how you access this award and places you can use it will be distributed near the end of the program.

Forbearance of Qualified Student Loans (federally funded, not private loans)

Corps Members who enter AmeriCorps NCCC with a qualified student loan are eligible to apply for forbearance. If you hold a qualified student loan in your name upon entering the program and wish to place the loan in forbearance, please log in to the My AmeriCorps Portal and complete the Forbearance Request online. **One forbearance request is necessary for each lender.** The following information is required:

- Name, address, and phone number of Lending Institution(s)/Loan Holder(s)
- Your permanent address and phone number
- Your Social Security Number

Forbearance: You do not have to make payments on a qualified student loan that is put in forbearance, though interest will accrue on your loan. However, if you complete the program, the Corporation for National and Community Service will pay the interest accrued during the 10 months of your AmeriCorps NCCC service. This interest payment will be made directly to your lender at the end of your service term.

A complete explanation of forbearance and its implications will be given during in-processing at the campus.

The Forbearance Request will be forwarded to your lender through the portal. You are not allowed to apply for forbearance until you have arrived at the campus and been in-processed. **We suggest you contact your lender prior to your service to verify qualification for forbearance through AmeriCorps NCCC.**

In order for a loan to be placed in forbearance, it cannot be in default and cannot be in a grace period.

Even if your loans qualify for forbearance, this forbearance does not take effect until you are enrolled in the program (arrive at the campus and in-process). Therefore, if payments for your loan are due any time before your arrival date, you are responsible for making those payments.

Child Care Allowance

A child care allowance is available to custodial or joint-custodial parents. The allowance is to pay for expenses related to day care. Corps Members who qualify for this benefit will need to complete the necessary forms and provide proof of dependent children (i.e. birth certificate). Please contact the MSS office at (601) 630-4056 or scarlock@cns.gov prior to your arrival if this benefit applies to you.

Personal Days

All Corps Members receive **three paid personal days** – days that you can take off when you would normally be working on a project. The use of personal days must be pre-approved by the Unit Leader. Those wishing to use their personal days must complete a Leave Request Form and submit it to their Team Leader at least 7 days prior to the day/days being requested. Team Leaders will have copies of the Leave Request Form. Transition weeks (time between projects) are reserved for training and programmatic activities; You should not plan on taking leave during that time. Corps Members who purchase airline tickets prior to having their leave request approved, do so at their own risk. Corps Members should also discourage parents/family members from purchasing tickets for them prior to confirmation of leave approval. Purchase of an airline ticket prior to leave approval does not guarantee that the leave request will be approved.

Corps Members also receive two paid days off to use for “Life After AmeriCorps” activities. Corps Members should use the same process as that for personal days to request “Life After AmeriCorps” days. Any additional time requested will be without pay and at the Unit Leader’s discretion.

Sick days do not count as personal leave days. Corps Members are responsible for making up the service hours they miss while on leave, except for “Life After AmeriCorps” activities, which they earn hours for.

Vacations/Holidays and Calendar

There are several paid breaks during your term of service. Housing will be available on campus during the breaks for Members who do not travel. Travel at these times will be at your own expense.

You are currently scheduled to have a one week break at the end of May. These dates are subject to change at any time, without notice. In the case of a major natural disaster, breaks can be removed altogether. Please keep in mind that if you make travel plans for this break and you have to change your travel plans, NCCC will not reimburse you for the cost of changing tickets and/or reservations. We encourage you not to make travel arrangements until after you have arrived on campus as break dates are subject to change.

Members will be allowed to take the day off for holidays while on the project site. You may leave the site and celebrate at your own expense ensuring that you return to the housing site by the designated time and or at the beginning of the following work day if approved by your Unit Leader. If members serve on a holiday due to scheduling, cost effectiveness of SPIKE travel or disaster response, those Members will be compensated with time off at a later date.

The Corps observes official Federal Holidays. In some cases, members may work on various holidays due to the schedules of project sponsors, cost effectiveness of SPIKE travel, or disaster relief. In such a case, those members will be compensated with time off at a later date.

During the course of the year there will be mandatory “All Corps Service Days”. On All Corps Service Days the whole Corps participates in a selected service project.

Corps Life **FAQ**

Q: How are roommates assigned?

A: If you have a roommate, they are assigned randomly. Only same gender matches are made for all rooms. You will not receive your room assignment until you arrive on campus.

Q: May I decorate my room?

A: NO!

Q: Will there be any free time?

A: You will have free time when there are no team or Corps obligations – i.e. working on the project site, training, service learning activities, team meetings, or other all-corps events. There is generally free time after work and on weekends, although during training you may have six-day weeks, and occasional evening sessions. Projects may frequently go beyond an eight-hour work day, and may have unique work schedules (i.e. Tues – Sat., working from 11:00am – 9:00pm), and you will have to be flexible to the needs of the project.

Q: Will I be given any sick days?

A: You are allotted three personal days, to be used for any occasion (after the conclusion of Corps Member Training Institute), and two "Life After AmeriCorps" days, to be used with permission to plan for the future, take tests, or go on job interviews. You will be issued sick days on an as-needed basis due to illness or medical treatment. It will be up to you to make up any hours not worked due to the use of personal leave or sick leave.

Q: Will there be any breaks?

A: Yes, there will be breaks. The exact dates of these breaks will be announced when they are available. All travel at these times will be at your own expense. All residence halls and project housing will remain open - you are not required to leave. Please remember that you may be called to a disaster relief operation during any of these breaks.

Q: Will I have holidays off?

A: AmeriCorps NCCC observes Federal Holidays which are indicated on the pay schedule calendar in your handbook. You may be asked to work or travel on these days depending on the schedule of your project and the cost effectiveness of travel or lodging.

Q: Can I take classes at night or work a part-time job?

A: No. The varying service projects and schedules, including projects that will be located in states throughout the region (SPIKE) will prevent you from committing to responsibilities involved with outside classes or part-time jobs.

Q: What are AmeriCorps NCCC disciplinary standards?

A: The NCCC Handbook includes all NCCC rules, policies, and procedures, which are intended to benefit our Corps and the community organizations we serve. It is important to review this handbook upon arriving to the campus. We will review this during the initial training period; however, you are ultimately responsible for understanding the policies and knowing their appropriate consequences if not followed.

Q: Will I be issued any supplies?

A: You will be given a sleeping bag, uniforms that include a heavy coat, jacket, steel-toe boots, and a backpack to use while on SPIKE.

Q: Are there uniform requirements?

A: While in your AmeriCorps NCCC uniform, facial piercings are not allowed except a small stud in the nose. Any jewelry worn in the ears must be studs only, no hoops or dangling earrings. Earrings and gauges must be closed and not exceed the size of a dime. This is for safety concerns. Hair color must be a natural looking color before you arrive on campus (i.e. it may be dyed, but not pink, green, blue, etc.) A full overview of uniforms will be covered when you arrive.

Q: Will I have health benefits?

A: Yes. Limited health care coverage is provided by CNCS and administered by SevenCorners, Inc. for injuries and illness that occur during the 10 months. Hospitals will take care of serious problems; otherwise, a local clinic will provide for general health care needs. You may use a private doctor as long as they are part of the contracted SevenCorners PPO network (Humana-Choice Care), otherwise you may have to pay for the visit at your own expense. Pre-existing conditions will not be covered. It is recommended that individuals with pre-existing conditions retain other health insurance to cover medical costs related to those conditions.

Highlights

- All NCCC facilities, housing, and project sites are drug, tobacco and alcohol-free. Possession or use of alcohol by anyone, regardless of age, will result in appropriate disciplinary action, including possible suspension or dismissal from program.
- Your will receive a roommate assignment when you arrive.
- The exact dates of your breaks will be announced when they are available.
- You will receive your first full living allowance within 3-4 weeks after arrival. Please plan finances accordingly for your first month in the program.
- Pre-existing conditions will not be covered by your AmeriCorps health plan. It is recommended that individuals with pre-existing conditions retain other health insurance to cover medical costs related to those pre-existing conditions.
- You will receive your education award, and information on how to use it, at the end of your service.
- Cell phones are permitted on campus, but we ask that you not use them for personal calls during on-duty hours.

FEMA Corps team meeting the President.

Member Development & Training

Service Learning

Many Corps Members arrive on campus with the desire to begin their community service immediately, enthusiastic to get the year underway. However, preparation and training are essential so that you and the communities you serve will have the best possible experience. It is also important that you understand how participation in the NCCC program relates to the larger goals of active citizenship and community engagement.

Service learning is a methodology through which Corps Membes acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform community service projects and gain an in-depth understanding of the value and impact of their work. Through ongoing reflection, service learning encourages participants to consider why certain needs and issues exist in a community and in what ways service projects address those needs and issues. This critical thinking will also help you to recognize how the knowledge, skills, and awareness gained in the NCCC will enable you to continue to help solve community problems long after your term of AmeriCorps service is complete.

AmeriCorps NCCC incorporates service learning into projects in many ways. The training given prior to a project is only one example. Your service learning experience will continue to evolve throughout the duration of your project. Not only will your practical skills develop, but you will learn more about the organization with which you are working and, ideally, connect with the community in which you are living.

At the conclusion of an NCCC project, each team writes a project portfolio. The portfolio will capture what your team has learned and accomplished on its service project. The experience you will have with a project promises to leave you enriched in many ways, contributing to your personal and intellectual growth.

Training

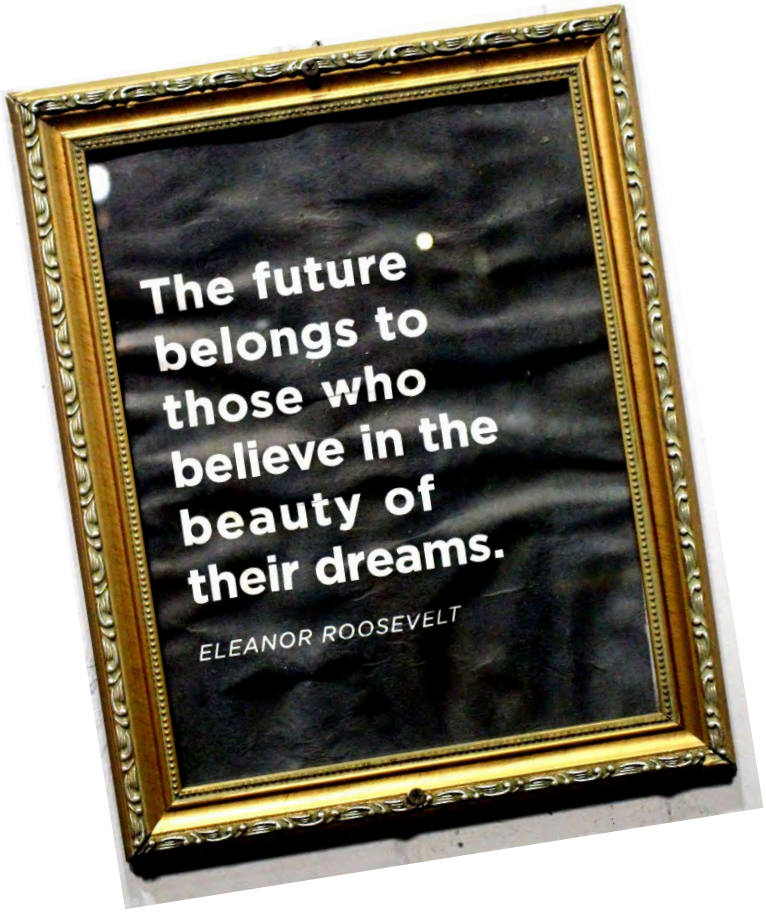
The Corps Training Institute (CTI) is an initial four-week training period designed to prepare Corps Members for their upcoming year of service. During this intensive training, you will receive instruction on how to do your best work in a safe and professional manner. The objective of CTI is to orient Corps Members to the culture, procedures, and policies of the NCCC. CTI will also provide you with skills that will enable you to do your job, and allow for team bonding before embarking on your first project. You will receive specialized disaster training from FEMA. You will learn CPR and First Aid. CTI is a very concentrated period of learning.

In addition to CTI, you will receive further training during transition weeks. Transition weeks are short periods of time that fall between project "rounds." Most FEMA Corps project rounds last 8-10 weeks. During transition weeks the entire Corps will return to the Vicksburg campus. Transition week is not a break or vacation – you will be expected to attend trainings, meetings, and participate in project preparation. The types of training you will receive during these periods may range from acquisition of information and skills that will enable you to do your job in the safest manner, to team building and leadership development. We are confident that the experience you bring to AmeriCorps NCCC, in combination with the new skills we will teach you, will prepare you to be a leader in your community tomorrow.

Member Development

Part of our mission at AmeriCorps NCCC is to help Team Leaders and members develop into catalysts for positive social change. While in the program, you will be required to complete a personal résumé and will be encouraged to do a personal portfolio, commemorating your work in AmeriCorps. Résumé workshops will be conducted during a transition week, along with other workshops to assist with your personal and professional development.

Member Development Associate, Brianne Connelly



Life After AmeriCorps (LAA)

Throughout the year, AmeriCorps NCCC offers the opportunity for Team Leaders and members to explore their options for "Life after AmeriCorps NCCC." This training will provide valuable information regarding resume development, interview skills, money management, how to start your own non-profit, careers in disaster response, short-term adventures, and a variety of other career options. Southern Region staff will also organize a Life After AmeriCorps event for Corps Members to speak with professionals in a variety of fields and learn about different career tracks. Presenters may include AmeriCorps NCCC alumni, as well as other organizations requested by the current class. Staff members are available throughout the year to assist with resume development and refinement. You are also granted two LAA Days during your member year with which you can pursue future plans. Please note that you will be held accountable for your activities during your LAA Days.

Teams

AmeriCorps NCCC is at its very core a team based program. Much of the value you will gain from your year of service will come from learning to work with your team members from a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences. As we like to say, your team is more like family, through the good and the bad you work together to make it through.

As a Corps Member, you will serve on a team of 8-12 members from a variety of backgrounds. You will prepare and eat meals, travel in your team's 15-passenger van, and live together, all the while working collaboratively on service projects throughout the Southern Region. Members are assigned to a unit, then placed on teams in such a way as to balance out the diversity of the Corps, while taking into consideration driver certification, education level, ethnicity, and gender.

Each Team is assigned a Field Team Leader that is responsible for the daily activities of the team and act as on-site project supervisors. Sponsoring agencies also provide on-site supervision at least 2/3 of the work week. Team Leaders are the liaison between the team, the project sponsor, and the NCCC administrative staff. The NCCC selects Team Leaders from a highly qualified pool of applicants who exhibit strong leadership skills and are willing to work long, hard hours. Team Leaders may have AmeriCorps NCCC experience or extensive leadership backgrounds.

Team Roles

Every Corps Member will be assigned a team position. Some individuals will serve in more than one role, while some positions will have two or more team members sharing the responsibilities. Some positions require special training, which will take place during CTI, as well as during transition weeks between project rounds.

VST

Vehicle/Safety/Tool Manager: Assists Team Leader with tool sign out and return. Conducts daily/weekly inventories of all tools issued and used. Takes notice of tool usage and storage on a regular basis to insure the safety of CM's. Assist's TL in addressing safety concerns. Performs monthly vehicle inspections (biweekly if needed). This individual also ensures the cleanliness of the vehicle inside and out.

POL

Project Outreach Liaison (POL): Ensures community engagement during SPIKE and identifies potential NCCC project sponsors. This individual will also be the point of contact for coordinating the team's Day of Service projects. They will also help to leverage volunteers for Day of Service and assist teammates with identifying Independent Service Projects (ISPs).

Recruiter

Recruiter: Recruiters organize at least 3 recruitment events per project round to recruit future members and build programs awareness in the communities their team serves. Recruiters are also responsible for managing and distributing recruitment materials (i.e. brochures, posters, fact sheets, etc.) and researching communities for potential recruiting events.

Media

Media Representative: Media reps are responsible for writing and distributing press releases for team projects, community days, assisting with social media (Twitter and Facebook), writing articles and collecting media coverage received to build program awareness. In addition, media reps are responsible for submitting good working pictures of their team.

SLI

Service Learning Initiator: Researches, organizes, and facilitates supplementary service learning activities directly related to the project. Other tasks to be completed by the SLI: Service Learning Development Plan, Community Mapping, the Service Learning section of the portfolio, and the Service Learning Progress Report.

FEMA Corps Service Projects

NCCC-FEMA Corps members solely focus on the administration of disaster preparedness, response and long -term recovery activities with FEMA, within and outside their campus region for the full 10 months of their service term. Members are dedicated to FEMA deployments in the areas of logistics, individual, public assistance are just a few examples. They provide support in areas ranging from working directly with disaster survivors to supporting disaster recovering centers to sharing valuable disaster preparedness and mitigation information with the public.

Members provide administrative and logistical support in areas that could include tasks like:

- Order materials, track inventory, load supplies and hardwire IT equipment
- Compile information in support of disaster preparation for public education
- Update electronic files, manage data and compile reports
- Assess and report on damage to public facilities
- Canvass communities to assess, inform and collect information
- Work with nonprofits and government agencies to coordinate services for disaster survivors
- Set up shelter operations and re-unification of families and pets
- Help survivors complete applications for disaster assistance

FEMA Corps members develop a depth of knowledge in emergency response and management at a national level, developing expertise. You are trained in one or more FEMA positions. Most or all of your service work will involve fulfilling the duties of that position. During CTI, members receive an overview of the FEMA positions available and afterwards fill out a survey to identify your unique skills, interests, and background experience. NCCC staff use that information to make FEMA position assignments.

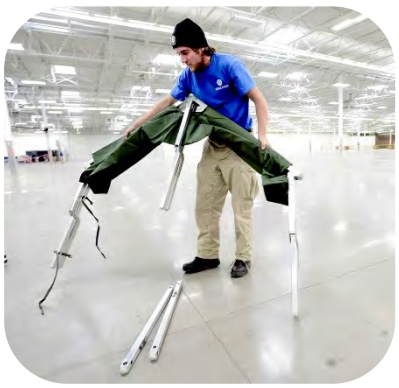
Some examples of the FEMA positions include:

- Public Assistance
- Project Specialist Individual Assistance
- Reports Specialist
- Voluntary Agency Liaison
- Specialist Mass Care/Emergency Assistance Specialist
- Individual Assistance Applicant Services Program Specialist
- Logistics Specialist
- Logistics System Specialist Applicant Services Program Specialist
- GIS

Although the Southern Region campus covers 11 Southeastern states, you may be deployed anywhere in the United States where there is a disaster.

Service Project Information

FEMA Corps projects are more administrative in nature than traditional NCCC projects, allowing members to focus on a specific position in the emergency management infrastructure of FEMA. This will allow members professional development and the opportunity to learn about, experience, and contribute to the administration of disaster relief and recovery.



SPIKEs

SPIKEs are projects that are more than a one-hour drive from campus.
During SPIKE projects, the team will establish temporary housing accommodations in the community where the project is being conducted.
You should come prepared to live in a variety of situations!
Examples of SPIKE housing:

- Extended Stay Hotels
- Churches
- Community Centers

Travel to SPIKE

Teams travel to the project site in a 12 or 15 passenger van. Most team members will be certified as van drivers. Certified drivers must attend a driver's class and take a driver's test at the campus. Only certified drivers are permitted to drive the NCCC vehicles. You cannot take your personal vehicle to your project. Medical reasons may also exclude members from certain driving privileges.

Project Information

- Your service year will be divided into 3 project rounds.
- The work hours for the team will be determined by the project that they are assigned to. This can range anywhere from 12-14 hours a day (i.e. during Disaster Response), to working close to a regular work week (Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00).
- Project lengths can vary from one day to up to two months. The average length of a project is eight to ten weeks.
- Teams will work solely with FEMA.
- Teams will be trained during CTI by FEMA in Disaster Relief Services in order to respond to national disasters. Teams will respond to disasters in any state or U.S. territory.

FEMA Corps Roles

In addition to your team roles you will be trained in specific roles related to disaster response an emergency management. These roles will be in areas of logistics, community relations, individual and public assistance and recovery.

What To Bring

NOTE: Please take care of all personal items. NCCC is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Clothing & Footwear

- Pants, jeans, shorts
- Shirts, sweaters
- Personal undergarments (including sports bras for females)
- Workout clothes (for 3 days a week of physical training)
- Athletic shoes
- Socks: athletic, thick socks to wear with steel toe boots
- White, grey, or black long-sleeved, plain shirts to wear under your uniform on cold days
- Other clothing of your choice (what you would normally wear during various seasons, but on a smaller scale). You will have nights and weekends to wear your personal clothes (3 or 4 outfits recommended.

You will be wearing your uniform on workdays. **DO NOT OVERPACK!**

Documents

- Valid Photo ID
- Driver's License
- Copy of State Issued Driving Record (past 3 years)

Electronics (optional)

- Cell phone
- Laptop
- Camera

Watch "Corps Member Style" on What to Bring

Red bag you'll get for SPIKE.

Other

- Medications
- Personal toiletries: deodorant, shampoo, soap, toothbrush & toothpaste, hair dryer, curling iron, shaving cream and razor, etc.
- Eyewear: extra pair of glasses, contacts, contact solution (contacts are not covered under the health plan), sunglasses
- Towels & washcloths
- Soft or collapsible laundry hamper
- Bedding: Sheets, blankets & pillow. Linens should fit a standard twin-sized bed.

Optional Clothing

- Thermal underwear
- Hiking shoes
- Dress Socks
- Bathrobe
- Jacket, winter coat, gloves, hat

What To Bring (cont.)

- Note: AmeriCorps does have some standard linens, blankets, and pillows available
- Cell phone with charger
- Water bottle

Optional Items

- Recreational Equipment: swimsuit etc.
- Entertainment: guitar, radio, books, video games, MP3 player, computer, board games, art materials, TV, etc.
- Personal decorations for your room
- Padlock or a small lock box for personal items such as credit cards, etc.
- Extra set of keys, if you bring a car.

NOTE: There are stores near campus where you can purchase some of these items when you arrive. There will be shuttles to and from these stores within your first couple days on campus.

The following items are not allowed due to a concern for your safety and that of the community:

Hot plates, microwaves, broilers, rice steamers, or cooking appliances

Alcoholic beverages/paraphernalia

Drugs or drug paraphernalia

Pets (not even fish, only rocks)

Candles or incense

Space heaters

Weapons (knives longer than 3", guns, or anything that could be used as a weapon)

Packing Light: The Art of Living On the Go

Members almost always over-pack. Keep in mind that you'll only be in Vicksburg for training, transition weeks, and maybe one project. For about 8 of your 10 months, you'll only see and use what you bring on SPIKE.

Also, while our campus in Vicksburg will serve as your "home base" for the year, your dormitory room may not be entirely your own the whole time. You may be required to move out of your room for a round so that we can use the space for other program needs in your absence. We have a limited amount of storage space on campus, but not much.

So, what do you need to do? Pack light!

Don't bring much more that you can bring with you on SPIKE (approximately two bags, depending on the project).

Limit large "non-essentials" in the "Optional Items" list above – think about what you'll really use often – is it worth it?

Don't ship any boxes to campus.

Plus, it's a whole lot easier to get a smaller amount of items home again at the end of the year!

Uniforms

You are required to wear a uniform. Uniforms are issued to Corps Members as a part of in-processing. Uniforms must be worn at all times when on duty. Duty times include all service days, training days, team, unit, and community meetings, while on desk or driver duty, or any other time when representing AmeriCorps NCCC. Corps Members will be issued the following garments:

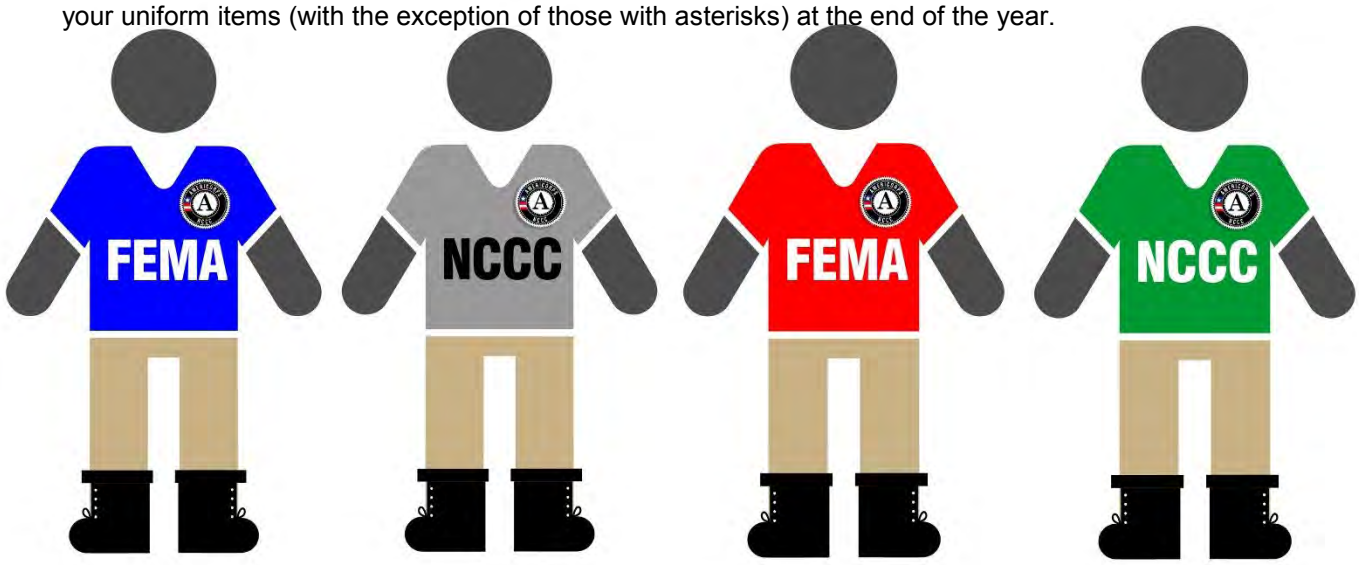
2 pairs of black BDU (battle dress uniform) pants
2 pairs of tan BDU (battle dress uniform) pants
2 pairs of khaki shorts
1 long-sleeve Blue polo shirt
1 short-sleeve gray polo shirt
1 black fleece jacket
2 short-sleeve gray T-shirts w/ NCCC emblems
1 long-sleeve gray T-shirts w/ NCCC emblems
1 gray hooded sweatshirt
*1 winter parka
1 pair of steel toed work boots
1 black belt
1 black wool cap
1 tan baseball cap
*1 red backpack for traveling

You will receive additional FEMA uniform items from FEMA during in-processing. Specific guidelines about how to wear the uniform will be discussed during Corps Training Institute (CTI), and can be found in the Member Handbook **(which cannot be shared)**.

The normal Corps Member uniform consists of a Blue T-shirt or sweatshirt (either of which can be worn as an outer garment) and the BDU pants. The kind of project will determine which uniform is to be worn. On special occasions, the specific uniform to be worn will be designated.

Footwear is project-specific. Safety considerations will always prevail in determining the type of footwear to be worn. You may wear personal footwear as long as it is closed-toe and closed-heel. Sandals are not permitted on project sites. When in uniform, only NCCC-issued headgear may be worn.

Items with this symbol, *, must be returned at the end of your term of service. If you are dismissed or leave before your term of service officially ends, all items must be cleaned and returned. Otherwise, you may keep your uniform items (with the exception of those with asterisks) at the end of the year.



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