

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps:

## LGBTQ Frequently Asked Questions

### Does AmeriCorps NCCC accept openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Corps Members and Team Leaders?

Yes. AmeriCorps NCCC does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression. Many Corps Members and Team Leaders identifying as LGBTQ have been very successful in the program. In addition, AmeriCorps NCCC also employs staff members who openly identify as LGBTQ.

### Are LGBTQ Corps Members and Team Leaders explicitly protected in nondiscrimination policies?

Yes. Page 6 of the AmeriCorps NCCC Member Handbook states "CNCS prohibits all forms of discriminations based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, **sexual orientation**, disability, **gender identity or expression**, marital or parental status, military service, or political affiliation." To clarify, members are explicitly protected within the program from discrimination by staff, Team Leaders, and Corps Members based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Though unlikely, the Corporation for National and Community Service cannot provide protection for members serving in jurisdictions where non-discrimination laws do not exist for sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression. These instances are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### Can LGBTQ Corps Members and Team Leaders be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity during their term of service?

Mindful of cultural norms in the communities they serve, the decision to serve openly is left to each individual member. Some LGBTQ members choose to be discreet about their sexual orientation/gender identity within the communities they serve, but are open on their team(s). Some LGBTQ members decide to keep their identities entirely to themselves and still others decide to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity to everyone with whom they come in contact. As every community is different, so too is the decision to be "out." AmeriCorps NCCC does not discourage or encourage members to "come out", but rather leaves that decision up to each member's best judgement.

### What is the likelihood of LGBTQ Corps Members or Team Leaders being placed in an area where being LGBTQ is not accepted?

As members do not get to choose, for the most part, their projects or the communities they serve in, it is possible that a team may be deployed to a community where some people are not favorable toward LGBTQ members. That being said, LGBTQ members have successfully served all over the country, including in communities where being LGBTQ isn't widely accepted. Before any project where this is a concern, members are encouraged to discuss the possibility with their team and/or AmeriCorps NCCC staff members to prepare themselves.

### What are some possible service assignments that might conflict with my LGBTQ identity, and how can I handle them?

AmeriCorps NCCC serves local, state, federal, and tribal governments as well as non-profit and faith-based organizations. Some specific examples includes schools, churches, state parks, after school programs, summer camps, volunteer tax programs, national monuments, community gardens, senior centers, homeless shelters, stewardship organizations and food banks. It is important for members to prepare for moving into any new community by doing research beforehand and discussing any trepidation with fellow teammates and staff members. As with any member, AmeriCorps NCCC encourages LGBTQ members to practice caution when integrating into a new community and to report any issues immediately.

### Does AmeriCorps NCCC have a preferred name option in their application system?

Yes, however, applicants must provide AmeriCorps NCCC their legal name in order to process an applicant's background check. In the case that a member's preferred name and legal name differ, AmeriCorps NCCC provides a preferred name box for the member to use. Members are free to use their self-selected name while serving.

### Does AmeriCorps NCCC allow transgender and gender non-conforming members to self-disclose their transgender or gender non-conforming identity?

Applicants must provide their sex assigned at birth (unless it has been legally changed) in the member portal when applying for AmeriCorps NCCC, in order to process an applicant's background check. At this time, there is no option available for incoming members to self-disclose their transgender or gender non-conforming identity on their application. That being said, applicants can self-disclose if they wish, either by contacting their assigned campus directly or by indicating their transgender or gender non-conforming identity on their initial medical screening form.

### Will transgender and gender non-conforming Corps Members and Team Leaders who choose to medically transition always be able to access medical services and/or pharmacies during their term of service?

As with any member who requires maintenance medicine, AmeriCorps NCCC encourages transgender members to procure medications they take regularly prior to deployment on project rounds. Many projects require members to live in remote areas and/or to camp for up to 10 – 12 weeks, where they may not have the same access to medical services to which they are accustomed. Members are encouraged to discuss any potential issues, if they feel comfortable, with campus counselors, their Team Leader and/or AmeriCorps NCCC staff members.