

LIVING ALLOWANCE & BENEFITS

During their term of service, members will receive a living allowance. The living allowance will cease once the individual leaves the program. The amount of this allowance is determined by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Federal and Social Security taxes will be withheld from their allowances. There are no deductions for state tax. The member is personally responsible for filing and paying their state taxes.

The living allowance is computed on a daily rate (approximately \$13.00) and is paid to participants biweekly. Members will receive approximately \$91.00 per week (\$181.44 per pay period/every two weeks). Payments cover a 14-day period and are paid ten days after the end of the pay period for which the allowance is earned. Funds will be deposited to the individual's bank account (see pay calendar for specific dates). The member is responsible for entering and keeping his or her bank account information updated in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members can view or print their earnings statements in My AmeriCorps Portal. Members' allowance will continue while on program breaks unless otherwise stated.

All members and team leaders must participate in the direct deposit program. Individuals who already have bank or credit union accounts may elect to have their living allowance deposited directly to that account or they may open new accounts at a local financial institution. Individuals who do not have accounts must open an account at a local financial institution within 14 days of their arrival on campus. Members must enter their direct deposit information into the My AmeriCorps portal during orientation/in-processing. It should be noted that the loss of a

living allowance at the end of the AmeriCorps NCCC program does not constitute a basis for claiming unemployment compensation.

HEALTH BENEFITS AND THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ACT

PURPOSE: To outline the procedures for receiving benefits under the AmeriCorps NCCC Health Benefits Program and under the Federal Employees Compensation Act.

A. HEALTH BENEFITS

Members are covered by the AmeriCorps NCCC Health Benefits Program managed by Seven Corners. These benefits and the procedures for obtaining care are explained in detail in the guide titled "Member Health Care Guide," which is provided during in-processing and which can be accessed either online or through the My Resources tab in the portal. A Seven Corners identification card will be given to every participant shortly after members arrive on campus.

1. Coverage

Coverage for each member begins automatically on the first day of training. Medical coverage ends on the date of termination from the program. Coverage includes payment for most medical and surgical costs, hospitalization, prescription drugs, and certain emergency dental, vision, and maternity care. However, these benefits may be affected by restrictions on payment for pre-existing conditions as well as other exclusions. Each

member should read the health benefits guide carefully and refer any questions to the member support specialist. Spouses and dependents are not covered under the AmeriCorps NCCC Health Benefits Program; therefore, participants with dependents may wish to continue their private coverage.

Members are not covered for prescription glasses/contact lenses or other vision problems. Glasses will be replaced if damaged in the line of duty, subject to a fee schedule in the health benefits guide. Participants with pre-existing conditions may also wish to continue their private coverage to ensure they will have adequate coverage during the course of the program. If a participant is a dependent under another plan, AmeriCorps NCCC is the secondary payer.

2. Conversion

On termination from service, a participant may want to convert from the group coverage plan provided by AmeriCorps NCCC to a private health insurance program (Celtic Conversion Program). Information is available by calling 1-800-365-2365. The option to convert must be exercised within 30 days of the date of termination from service. If a participant exercises this option, the private plan becomes effective on the day after termination from AmeriCorps NCCC service and all costs are the responsibility of the member.

3. Explanation of Benefits

The region director shall designate a member of his staff to further explain these benefits as necessary. A list of the most frequently

asked questions concerning your health coverage can be found at the end of this section. Please read them carefully.

B. FEDERAL EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ACT

Under Section 12620(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, members and team leaders are considered employees of the Federal Government for purposes of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), which is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) of the U.S. Department of Labor. This office is solely responsible for the adjudication of FECA claims. Members who sustain on-the-job injuries during their service may file workers compensation claims only after the program year has ended or they have left the program. However, documentation of the injury and the circumstances leading to the injury should be prepared at the time of the injury.

1. Benefits

FECA provides workers' compensation benefits for illness or injury if it is determined by OWCP to be service related - i.e., caused or aggravated by the performance of an assignment. However, participants may not be covered by FECA if the injury or disability results from their own misconduct, intoxication, or willful intent to bring about injury or death to themselves or others. Claims will be submitted to OWCP only upon the member's termination from AmeriCorps NCCC. Benefits approved under FECA begin after termination from AmeriCorps NCCC service and include payment for continuing medical care and

compensation for wage loss and permanent impairment of certain member or functions of the body in the event of a service-related disability. FECA also contains provisions or payment of certain death benefits such as shipment of body, funeral, and burial costs, and survivor benefits if the participant's death results from an injury or illness sustained in the performance of official duties.

2. Claims Procedures

If a participant is injured or experiences an emergency illness related to a service assignment, the region director and the national director of AmeriCorps NCCC must be notified immediately. The region director will provide the participant with the necessary federal employment compensation forms (CA-1 or CA-2) to protect his or her right to apply for OWCP for compensation. The CA-1 form, "Notice of Traumatic Injury," should be filed when an accident or physical injury occurs during performance of duties. The CA-2 form, "Notice of Occupational Disease or Illness," should be filed when a disease or illness is suspected of being service-related. Although an illness or injury may not appear to be serious enough to result in compensation eligibility, the claim forms should be filed to protect the participant's rights in the event that complications develop at a later date. Members have three years from the date of injury or three years from the date they realized that the injury was service-connected.

3. Campus Responsibilities

Campuses will:

- Advise and assist individual claimants regarding the preparation, submission, and follow-up of their respective FECA claims.
- Provide appropriate assistance in compiling and submitting all pertinent information relating to FECA claims.
- Submit all FECA claims and relevant material to the Corporation's National Office, which is responsible for review, submission, and follow up with OWCP concerning all claims.

4. Appeals Procedures

A participant may appeal any claim rejected by OWCP by submitting a request for review within 90 days from the date of the final decision by OWCP. In filing an appeal, it is the participant's responsibility to contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., and to comply with all established procedures. AmeriCorps NCCC cannot participate in any appeals but may assist the participant in providing information to the Department of Labor.

MEDICAL BENEFITS SUMMARY SHEET

All AmeriCorps NCCC members are entitled to certain medical and dental benefits during the period they are serving with AmeriCorps NCCC. It is important that members understand the basic medical entitlements, especially since this is the most misunderstood aspect of service. The following list of frequently asked questions and answers should help to answer most of your questions.

1. What type of medical coverage will I have as an AmeriCorps NCCC member?

All members and team leaders are covered for both routine as well as emergency medical care. However, there is one exception to this general rule. It applies to those individuals who enter the program with what is considered a "pre-existing medical condition." Some common pre-existing medical conditions are pregnancy, diabetes, and asthma. (The preceding list is certainly not exhaustive, and is not meant to be.) Questions about pre-existing conditions can be answered by calling Seven Corners for a determination at 866-699-4186.

2. If I have a pre-existing condition, how will I be covered?

If an emergency occurs, you will be taken to the closest medical facility, where you will be stabilized. Should you require medical follow-up for your condition, the cost of that follow-up is borne by the member. Persons with pre-existing medical conditions are eligible to participate in the prescription drug program that is offered by the carrier. They need a current prescription from a medical doctor. Each member receives a copy of the care providers' handbook during in-processing. It contains important facts for participants in the program.

3. Is treatment for mental health included under this policy?

In most instances, mental health problems are pre-existing conditions. If such is the case, then it is the responsibility of the member to assume this cost. It has been the policy of the AmeriCorps NCCC to pay for an evaluation as to whether a member should continue in the program under specific circumstances. Aside from this, the cost for additional consultations is the responsibility of the member. The member will be entitled to three visits to a mental health professional at no cost to the member.

4. Can female members receive pap smears, mammograms, or pelvic examinations?

Yes. Each type of examination is limited to one annually.

5. Can I get birth control pills from the medical provider?

The current provider will provide birth control pills if prescribed by a physician.

6. What type of dental coverage will I receive while a member of this program?

There is no dental coverage while in the program. Routine dental care is not covered under this health plan. That means the cost of cleanings, fillings, crowns, dentures, routine removal of wisdom teeth, and preventative X-rays are not covered and will be paid for by the member. The only dental coverage is for emergencies. Oral injuries incurred in the line of duty will be treated and the member's condition stabilized.

7. What about orthodontic treatment/visits while in this program?

This is not an allowable expense and will not be reimbursed.

8. What about glasses/contacts? What if I should break them while I'm working?

If you break your glasses/lose a contact, the care provider will reimburse you, up to an allowable amount, to get another set of glasses/or replace a contact lens. Consult the medical care providers' handbook for the exact allowable amount.

9. Am I covered under this medical plan when I'm home on vacation or spike?

Yes.

10. How will I get to see a doctor while I'm in the program?

Each day there will be an announced sick call for all members. If required, members will be transported to the nearest medical care provider to be seen by a physician. In nearly every case, the facility will prepare the necessary paperwork, obtain your signature, and forward the claim. In situations where the individuals are working away from the campus, transportation will be provided to the nearest medical facility. All members should have in their possession their medical card to be shown to the treatment facility. Should any problems be encountered, members should refer the medical facility to the member support specialist.

11. What if I have to fill a prescription?

Simply present your health identification card to one of over 53,000 PharmaCare pharmacy network locations. Most pharmacy and supermarket chains are in this network. You will have to pay a \$5.00 co-pay for each prescription that is filled.

12. Does my medical coverage cover doctor's prescriptions?

Yes, even if it is a pre-existing condition. Refer to the health benefits guide for the few medications that are not covered.

13. I have a dependent son or daughter. Are they covered under my medical plan?

No, only the member.

14. What happens if a pregnancy is determined before/after entering the program?

It is the policy of AmeriCorps NCCC to allow pregnant prospective members to participate in the AmeriCorps NCCC program. However, because this condition is pre-existing, all associated medical costs (prenatal through delivery) are the responsibility of the member and will not be reimbursed by either the medical provider or AmeriCorps NCCC. Members who become pregnant after their entry into AmeriCorps NCCC are covered for prenatal care visits. Additionally, if a member becomes pregnant after entry into the program and delivers during the course of the regular program, the medical costs associated with the delivery will be covered up to the limits of the medical coverage. The plan does not cover a member who elects to abort her pregnancy.

NOTE: There are no stated coverages for the child after birth, which means that any additional medical costs associated with the child will be borne by the member. However, if the member does not deliver during the program, the medical coverage for the member terminates at midnight of the last day of the program.

15. What are the limitations/exclusions associated with my medical benefits?

The limitations/exclusions are contained in the guide that will be provided to you when you report to the campus and are in-processed.

16. I am currently covered by my parents/or other medical program. Should I continue this coverage?

Since the coverage that you will receive as a member is limited, we strongly encourage you continue with your previous policy.

17. If I get sick while at home and am unable to find out if the facility accepts AmeriCorps NCCC insurance coverage, will I still be reimbursed?

The member should contact Seven Corners at 1-866-699-4186 to determine the location of the nearest health care provider. If this is not possible, the member should proceed to the nearest medical facility, obtain treatment and file the appropriate claim.

18. When does a member's coverage terminate?

Health benefits coverage ends at midnight on the day the member terminates his or her service.



EDUCATION AWARD

PURPOSE: To provide AmeriCorps NCCC members with information concerning the AmeriCorps Education Award.

Regulation: To earn or be entitled to an education award, each AmeriCorps NCCC member must comply with regulations established under The National and Community Service Act of 1993 that created the National Service Trust Fund (the Fund). The Fund grants education awards to persons who successfully complete a term of service in an AmeriCorps program. The education award is taxable in the year it is used.

A. ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for an education award, you must:

- (1.) Be a U.S. citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.
- (2.) Be at least 17 years of age at the commencement of your term of service or be an out-of-school youth 16 years of age at the commencement of service
- (3.) Have a high school diploma or its equivalent
- (4.) Successfully complete a term of service in an approved national service position and perform at least 1,700 hours of national service for a full award (of the 1,700 hours, at least 80 hours must be independent service hours). Members must complete the program in good standing. Under special circumstances, you may receive a prorated award if you are unable to complete your full term. (See pg. 40, 10-11 or pg. 42, G)

B. USE OF EDUCATION AWARD

Your education award can be used in the following ways:

- To repay qualified existing or future student loans;
- To pay all or part of the cost (tuition, book, lab fees) of attending a qualified institution of higher education (including certain vocational schools); and
- To repay expenses incurred while participating in an approved school-to-work program.

C. AMOUNT OF AWARD

Currently the amount of the education award for full-time AmeriCorps service is \$5,500. This amount could change in the future as the education award is now tied to the Pell Grant. AmeriCorps members are eligible to earn up to the equivalent of two full time education awards, and they have up to seven years to use the award. The amount of the two full time education awards could be distributed over three years of service if a member did not receive the full amount in any given year. You can use your award only as noted above and may use all or any portion at any time after the completion of your term of service. For example, you may apply a portion of your award to existing qualified student loans and use the remainder to pay for authorized college costs. You may apply for an extension of the expiration date of your award if you have not used it within the stipulated seven year period. However, an extension is not automatic and is granted

only under certain circumstances (e.g., you served a second AmeriCorps term of service, served in the Peace Corps, served in the military, or you were unavoidably prevented from using the award within the seven-year period the award was in effect).

D. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COMPLETE YOUR SERVICE?

When you complete your term of service, you will be asked to go into the My AmeriCorps Portal and complete your exit survey and form. The member support specialist notifies the Office of the National Service Trust that you have successfully completed the program through the approval of that form. Successful completion of the program includes having provided citizenship eligibility documentation at the beginning of the program and the payment of all fines and money owed as a result of damage to, or loss of, government property. Failure to pay this money may either delay, or totally preclude, the receipt of your education award.

To access your education award, all alumni are required to access it through the education award tab in the My AmeriCorps Portal by clicking on the "Create Education Award Payment Request" and submitting it.

To have a payment made from your Trust account, you must go to the My AmeriCorps Portal Education Award tab, indicate the amount of the payment, identify the loan holder or the school you plan to attend, and click submit to send it to them. Please follow-up with the school to ensure they received the money.

E. LOAN AND INTEREST POSTPONEMENT WHILE YOU ARE SERVING IN AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps members have the option of postponing repayment of their qualified student loans while enrolled in an AmeriCorps program. The type of loan postponement for which AmeriCorps members are eligible is referred to as a forbearance, and it is based upon their national service. Your lender will be able to tell you if your particular loans qualify for this forbearance or any other type of postponement while you are serving.

PROCEDURE: In order to obtain this benefit, at the time you begin your service you must submit a Forbearance Request on the My AmeriCorps Portal website by clicking "Create Forbearance Request". If your loan qualifies, the loan holder will process your request accordingly.

Check with your lender to determine whether your student loan qualifies for other types of postponements, either deferments or forbearances.

F. INTEREST PAYMENTS

Interest accrual: If a member has successfully completed a term of service and earned an education award, the National Service Trust Fund will pay all or part of the interest that accrued on qualified student loans during the participant's period of service. The accrued interest paid from the Trust is an additional benefit to you and is not deducted from your education award balance.

Unless you complete your agreed upon term of service or are released from service for compelling personal reasons, the Trust by law cannot pay any interest that accrues on your loan(s). Also, the Trust cannot pay any interest outside the period you were earning an education award. Although you may find that some loans may not qualify to have interest paid by the Trust, it may be paid under other programs or authorities. Check with your loan holder.

Upon the successful completion of your term of service, you must go to the My AmeriCorps Portal website and click "Create Interest Accrual Request" and submit it for processing. If approved, the interest accrued will be paid to the lender.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. What do I need to do to get an education award?

You must complete 1,700 hours of service and 9 months of service in an approved national service position to receive a full award. Within 20 to 30 days of completion, the Education Award should be reflected in the My AmeriCorps Portal.

2. What is the amount of the award I will receive?

The amount of your education award depends upon the term of service you complete. If you complete a full-time (minimum of 1,700 hours) term of service, you currently will receive a \$5,550 award (This could change based on the maximum amount of the Pell Grant in any given year). Depending on the circumstances, you may receive either a pro-rated or a part-time award.

3. How many education awards can I receive?

You may receive up to the equivalent of two full education awards. The full amount of the two awards could be paid out over three (3) terms of service if you do not receive the full amount for each of the first two terms of service. However, this does not affect the NCCC's two term limit. While you may serve in a combination of AmeriCorps programs for up to three terms, under no circumstances will you be eligible to receive more than the total amount of two education awards.

4. How long do I have to use my education award?

You must use the award within seven years of the date you complete your service. You may apply for an extension of this time period if you were unavoidably prevented from using the award during the period. You must apply before the end of the seven-year period.

5. What can I use my education award for?

Awards can be used to pay for tuition or repay existing or future qualified educational loans to pay for the cost of attending a qualified college or graduate school or an approved school/work program (as defined by the Departments of Education and Labor). The award isn't limited to one loan or one school; it can be used to pay several qualified loans or to pay the costs of attendance at several educational institutions, or a combination of the two.

6. What expenses are considered part of the "cost of attending" a qualified school?

The Department of Education has defined the term "cost of attendance" to mean tuition, normal fees, an allowance for books and supplies, and, if you are eligible, allowances for room and board, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses. Your school determines your cost of attendance in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Education.

7. What kinds of schools can I attend using the awards?

You may use your education award to pay for expenses at "Title IV schools." Briefly, a Title IV school is an institution of higher education that participates in the U.S. Department of Education's Title IV student aid programs. This means that students who attend the school are eligible to receive some of these federally guaranteed student loans: Perkins Loans, Direct Loans, and Stafford Loans. The school will have a Title IV Program Participation Agreement with the U.S. Department of Education. Title IV schools include most institutions of higher education (including graduate and professional programs), as well as some vocational schools. If in doubt, you should check with the institution prior to making definite plans. The institution's financial aid office will know if they meet this requirement. You should ask if they are a Title IV school or if they participate in the federal government's Title IV financial aid programs. You do not need to receive other federal student aid in order to use your education award; this merely defines qualified school, where you are able to use your award.

What kinds of loans can I pay off using the awards?

A qualified student loan means any loan made, insured, or guaranteed pursuant to Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), other than a loan made to a parent of a student pursuant to section 428 B of the Act; and any loan made pursuant to Title VII or VIII of the Public Service Health Act (42 U.S.C. 292a et seq.). These citations should be on your loan papers. Your lender will be able to tell you if the loan is covered. Examples of common "qualified" federal student loans include Stafford Loans, Direct Loans, and Perkins Loans.

Some student loans made by state agencies are now considered qualified student loans for the purpose of the AmeriCorps Education Award. "State agency loans" must meet this criterion: any loan determined by an institution of higher education to be necessary to cover a student's cost of attendance at such institution and made directly to a student by a State agency. An example of a state agency loan is a short-term loan made to the student by a state college.

If you are unsure whether the school or the loan qualifies, ask the school or lender for written proof.

8. Can an education award be used to study outside the United States?

There are some foreign schools where you can use your education award. Those schools do participate in the U.S. Department of Education's student aid programs. To find out if a particular school participates, you can call the U.S. Department of Education's Student Aid toll-free number at 1-800-433-3243. The question to ask them is whether the school you are interested in participates in the Federal government's student aid programs.

Many postsecondary institutions in this country offer educational opportunities abroad. As long as the institution itself is a Title IV school and the payment is to be made to the Title IV School, you may use the education award to study overseas.

9. Will the education award affect my eligibility for other student financial aid?

The education award will not be taken into account in determining eligibility for some federal student aid, but it will for other federal aid. The Corporation has no jurisdiction over whether state or private universities-private scholarship funds will take it into account in determining eligibility for institutional aid; however, the Corporation has requested that institutions not do so. Be sure to notify your financial aid adviser that the education award is taxable because it may affect your financial aid eligibility for future years. Your financial aid office will be able to provide you guidance on when to use your education award to receive the maximum benefit for your entire financial aid package.

10. What happens if I do not complete my full term of service?

A member who has served at least 15 percent of the term of service and is released from service for compelling personal reasons is eligible to receive a pro-rated award, based on the length of service. Members who do not successfully complete their term or who are released for cause are not eligible for any portion of an award.

11. What are compelling personal reasons?

Compelling personal reasons are those circumstances that are unforeseen, or beyond an individual's

control. Examples of circumstances that might be considered to be compelling personal reasons are serious illness/injury to the member or the death of an immediate member of the participant's family. (See addendum on the following page.)

12. What happens if I withdraw from the school or fail to complete my period of enrollment for which the award has been used?

The school must have a fair and equitable refund policy that complies with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. If there is any refund owed and returned to the Corporation, the amount will be credited to your account in the Trust, and can be used by you, within seven years of your completion of service.

13. Will I have to pay taxes on my education award?

Yes, your education award is taxable in the year it is used. If you use a portion of your award, you must include that portion as income when you file your tax returns the next April.

14. How can I get some more help figuring out how to save on my federal taxes?

Unfortunately, the Corporation does not have the tax expertise to give individual tax guidance. While there is no substitute for a tax professional, you can start learning the basics by contacting the Internal Revenue Service in any of the following ways:

- The IRS TELETAX (1-800-829-4477) has recorded information on the new education credits (Topic #605) and student loan interest deduction (Topic #456).
- To order free publications and forms, call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676). You can start with Publication 910, Guide to Free Tax Services, and Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Higher Education. These publications are also available on-line.
- The IRS's phone number is 1-800-829-1040.

15. Is accrued interest paid on my student loans by the Trust taxable?

Yes, interest payments made by the Trust are considered taxable and are reported to the IRS.

16. Should I include my service dates when I request forbearance?

When you submit your request for forbearance to your loan holder, you should include the dates of your service.



17. How can I get my accrued interest paid?

In order for the Trust to pay the interest that has accrued on a qualified student loan during your term of service, you must go to the My AmeriCorps Portal and submit a request for accrued interest to be paid. When the Trust receives the completed request and it meets the Trust requirements, a payment will be sent to your loan holder.

18. Is my award transferable? For example, if I am unable to use it, can I transfer the award to another individual?

Yes and No. The education award is only transferable if the member is 55 years old or higher. This could apply only to an NCCC team leader who is at least 55 years of age. Because NCCC members must be between the ages of 18-24 does not apply to them.

19. Who do I ask if I have other questions?

You may call the National Service Trust Hotline at the Corporation for National and Community Service at 1-888-507-5962 or visit My Education Award in the My AmeriCorps Portal to have any questions answered.

G. PERSONAL AND COMPELLING REASONS

The Corporation for National and Community Service has designated the national director of AmeriCorps NCCC to decide on a case-by-case basis whether a situation warrants that a member receive a pro-rated award. The Corporation feels very strongly, however, that the situation must be beyond the member's control. The following are examples of circumstances that could justify the early release of a member and entitle the member to a portion of an award:

- Sickness or critical illness of the member;
- Death or critical illness of a member's immediate family (spouse, parent, sibling, child, or guardian);

- Acceptance by a member of an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work; and
- Programmatic problems not under the control of the member.

If a member leaves AmeriCorps NCCC service for any of the reasons noted above, and has served at least 15 percent of his or her service (or 255 hours for full-time service), the member would be eligible for a portion of the education award corresponding to the period served. To determine the percentage of the award, the number of credible service hours is divided by 1,700 hours. The resulting percentage is then multiplied by the education award to determine the amount of the pro-rated award.

MEMBER HANDBOOK

Generally, the following situations would not entitle/justify the member receiving an award: terminating to go back to school (with limited exceptions); terminating to get a job; terminating because the member finds that he or she doesn't enjoy the work; terminating because of the size of the living allowance; or terminating to move to another area of the country. While these reasons may seem justifiable to our members, the service activity (campus) and the community will suffer when a member departs. Part of national service is based on a commitment to completing the member's contract. If the member resigns for any of these reasons or other reasons that are within his or her control, the individual will receive no portion of the AmeriCorps Education Award.

Region directors will be required to make these determinations at the time of the member's departure and their decisions will be indicated on the end of service form that each member is required to complete and, when forwarded to the Corporation, will become the substantiating document used to issue awards. Decisions will be made by the region directors based on the criteria contained above. Each member who leaves the AmeriCorps NCCC program early will be given the opportunity to apply for an award at the time of his or her departure citing the reasons why he or she believes that the award is justified. The region director will then determine the validity of the request and provide the documentation to justify his recommendation on the end of term of service form.

EDUCATION AWARD

Member	Completes Program - 9 months of service	Completes 1,700 or More Hours	Completes Less than 1,700 Hours	Departs Program		Type of Award
				Compelling	Non-Compelling	
	Yes	Yes				Full
	Yes		Yes*			Pro Rated
	No	Yes		Yes		Pro Rated (Full)
	No	Yes			Yes	None**
	No		Yes	Yes		Pro Rated
	No		Yes		Yes	None

* * Does not depart, completes program with less than 1,700 hours because of compelling reasons.

** Exception: A member may be permitted to depart the program early if the member has completed at least 1,700 hours of service and 9 months of service and is departing in order to meet a window of opportunity to enter school or to work/serve with another service organization (e.g. AC State & National, VISTA, Peace Corps, or the armed forces) Proof of acceptance by the institution or program and the institution's/program's requirement to report early must be documented in writing.

Pro-Rated Award - the education award equals the number of creditable service hours divided by 1,700, multiplied by the amount of the award.



CHILD CARE BENEFITS

AmeriCorps NCCC offers child care benefits to qualified members. The maximum amount of child care assistance a member can receive is \$400 per child per month. To qualify for the NCCC child care benefit, you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Your household income does not exceed the limit determined by the state in which the child care is provided. This limit is different for each state and may change annually. In determining household income, the NCCC member's living allowance is disregarded.
- You do not already receive a child care subsidy from another source for the same child.
- Your child must be under age 13.
- You must be the legal guardian of the child.

First Financial Associates administers the child care benefit program for AmeriCorps NCCC. Therefore, you apply directly to First Financial for the child care benefit. You may download the NCCC child care application and more detail about the application process from the First Financial website at <http://1stfinancialassociates.com>. You may also call at (800) 453-8151.

As administrator, First Financial, pays the child care subsidy directly to your provider. First Financial also verifies the following:

- Your eligibility for the NCCC child care subsidy (whether you are serving in NCCC); First

Financial may verify service through the NCCC campus office in the state where you are assigned.

- Your household income (Household income must comply with state regulations.)
- Credentials of your child care provider (whether the provider is authorized to provide child care in that state)
- Your child's attendance in child care during the time for which the provider submitted an invoice (First Financial requires verification of attendance before paying the invoice.)
- Age of the child (The NCCC member must produce evidence of the child's birth date.)

STATE BENEFIT LIMITS

Each state has different benefit limits for child care to eligible households. The NCCC program looks to these state limits for guidance in determining eligibility and the level of benefit. However, the maximum child care subsidy that can be provided to the NCCC is \$400 per child per month. In addition, the NCCC subsidy cannot exceed the prevailing rate in the state in which the care is provided. The prevailing rate is determined by each state and may change each year. If the state's prevailing rate is less than the NCCC subsidy, the lower rate prevails.

In some states, the NCCC child care benefit is less than a benefit that you may qualify to receive from another source.

EMERGENCY LEAVE AND PERSONAL ABSENCES

PURPOSE: To establish policy and procedures governing emergency and personal absences of AmeriCorps NCCC members.

A. EMERGENCY LEAVE

Emergency leave may be granted in cases of death or under emergency conditions (a threat to life) where the member's presence is mandated. The relationship to the member must fall within the following familial relationships:

- spouse
- children (including stepchildren, adopted children, and biological children)
- parents or persons in loco parentis (acting in place of) to the member
- siblings
- grandparents

Members traveling on emergency leave are required to furnish their own transportation both to and from the emergency site. Members granted emergency leave will be entitled to receive their normal living allowances for a period not to exceed seven days. For absences in excess of seven days, members will be placed on administrative suspension, and will be in a no-pay status. This status must be approved by the region director. Members will not be entitled to accrue creditable service hours during their absence.

B. PERSONAL ABSENCES

Members who do not meet the above criteria but believe that their circumstances require their

presence away from the campus may submit a written request for personal leave through their team leader and unit staff to the region director at least five working days before the start date for an approved personal absence. If approved, and at the discretion of the region director, members will be granted a personal absence for an approved period of time. In no instance will paid personal absences exceed five days during the program duration. All members are authorized three personal days and two "Life After AmeriCorps" days' leave during their 10 months of service. Living allowances will be paid during their approved personal leave. Service hours will not be earned during the three personal days, but service training hours are earned for the two "Life After AmeriCorps" approved personal days. It should be noted that members and team leaders do not accrue time off or vacation time except for those national holidays and authorized breaks, as established in the program calendar. There may be extenuating circumstances where a member may request and receive unpaid personal leave beyond the five paid days.

C. ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE (AWOL)

Members who absent without leave for seven days may be dismissed from the program in absentia.

TRAVEL

PURPOSE: To establish policies and procedures governing travel of members and team leaders.

The following policies and procedures govern all official travel performed by AmeriCorps NCCC members and team leaders. AmeriCorps NCCC will provide travel for the following:



- Travel from the member's Home of Record (HOR) to the campus
- Member travel to HOR from the campus upon termination
- Team leader relocation allowance upon completion of the team leaders' service term
- Special Purpose Travel

A. CAMPUS ARRIVAL

1. Campus Arrival Travel Entitlement

AmeriCorps NCCC will assist members with their transportation arrangements and expenses to their designated campus based upon the member's home of record (HOR).

Upon acceptance into the program, members will be required to go into the My AmeriCorps Portal and complete the Transportation Selection Form to select their option for transportation to their campus. If the member's application has a current address other than the permanent residence, the member should notify the campus on the transportation selection form before travel arrangements are made to campus. Submission of this form by the requested date is critical for making travel arrangements in a timely manner, notifying the member of the travel arrangements, and subsequently permitting the members to plan their arrival accordingly.

Upon arrival at the campus, as part of the check-in process, campus staff will assist the member with the completion of the travel voucher, which must be completed by all

members. Travel arrangements are made shortly before arrival, and information will be sent to the member accordingly.

B. CAMPUS DEPARTURE

1. Completion of Program Travel

During the eighth month of service, members will complete Corporation Form 311 to provide information for departure travel. Based upon this information, the members will be prepaid any due travel entitlement by traveler's checks or cash or receive an electronic ticket from the campus on the day of out-processing. In order for a member to make an official change to his or her HOR for return travel, a letter must be written to the region director or his/her designee as soon as the change occurs, but not later than one month prior to graduation from the program. The letter should request approval for a new HOR and include an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the requested change. In addition to the explanation for the change in the HOR, the member may be required to provide additional documentation that substantiates the change in HOR. A change of the member's HOR to a location outside the United States or the Territories of the United States will result in the member receiving a travel reimbursement not to exceed the amount authorized for travel to the original HOR (see "Other Options" on page 50). Departing members receive their itineraries about two weeks before their departure.

2. Disenrollment for Program/Termination Travel

Members are authorized one-way travel expenses for return to their HOR upon voluntary or involuntary early termination from the program. The entitlements are the same as those described in "Travel Methods" on page 47.

C. TEAM LEADER RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

1. Campus Arrival

The purpose of the team leader relocation allowance is to assist the team leaders in transferring personal items from their HOR to their designated campus. Each new team leader will be provided a relocation allowance of \$250. The team leader will receive reimbursement via a debit card. If a team leader is transferred to another campus during the program year, the campus will ship the team leader's personal effects to the new campus. There will not be a relocation allowance for this transfer. If a member is promoted to team leader, the member is not entitled to receive the relocation allowance because the member is already on campus. Upon successful completion of the team leader contract, the team leader will be entitled to a \$250 relocation allowance. The total amount of relocation allowance payable to team leaders cannot exceed \$500 during their entire service in AmeriCorps NCCC, including a second \$250 payment upon completion of their final contract. Second year team leaders are not eligible for a relocation allowance even if there is time in between an assignment.

2. Campus Departure

The second part of the \$500 team leader relocation allowance is payable to all team leaders upon completion of the AmeriCorps NCCC program and the team leaders' service. Early termination, whether voluntary or involuntary, will result in forfeiture of the second \$250 relocation allowance.

D. TRAVEL NOT COVERED BY AMERICORPS NCCC

Personal, non-official travel will be neither arranged nor funded by AmeriCorps NCCC. This includes authorized emergency leave as defined in the handbook. Members assume personal and financial responsibility for these trips. AmeriCorps NCCC cannot provide advances or loans to members for these expenses. It is not possible to use the Corporation's travel agency, or to receive a government rate ticket, when traveling for personal reasons. However, the campus staff will provide as much assistance as possible in making commercial travel arrangements and other assistance necessary.

E. TRAVEL METHODS

The following outlines the options a member has when determining how to travel to/from campus:

1. Travel by Commercial Carrier

a. Plane and Bus Tickets

Members authorized to travel via air or bus will be provided a ticket issued by the

campus. The electronic ticket will be issued at the campus (proper government issued picture ID will be required at the airport). Departing members will be provided the ticket on the day of departure from the campus. After the tickets are issued, members may make changes to their tickets by dealing directly with the commercial carrier. AmeriCorps NCCC will not pay for any changes to the ticket. The airline selected for use on specific routes is mandated (through pre-negotiated Government Services Agency contracts) and cannot be changed by AmeriCorps NCCC. Airlines and travel agents will not issue cash refunds to members for common carrier tickets issued by AmeriCorps NCCC. Credits are issued to AmeriCorps NCCC. For some arriving members, in extreme circumstances, the campus will not be able to provide a pre-paid bus ticket. In that case, the member will be directed to purchase the bus ticket, and then submit a Claim for Reimbursement during campus in-processing. If a member prefers not to travel by the method provided by AmeriCorps NCCC, he or she should consider purchasing a bus/rail/air ticket using the method described in the "Other Options" section on page 50.

b. Airline Baggage

Recently, most airlines implemented an airline baggage fee for checked baggage on commercial carriers. NCCC may reimburse expenses related to baggage as follows:

With advanced approval by the region

director or designated representative, transportation charges for authorized excess baggage provided that a receipt is obtained from the airline carrier;

With advanced approval by the region director or designated representative, necessary charges for transferring baggage provided that a receipt is obtained from the airline carrier;

With advanced approval by the region director or designated representative, necessary charges for storage of baggage when such charges are the result of official business baggage provided that a receipt is obtained from the airline carrier;

Any charges for checked baggage provided that a receipt is obtained from the airline carrier.

This baggage fee reimbursement only applies:

To the first bag provided that the Airlines charge a fee for the first bag. Each Airline baggage fee policy varies.

If the Airline does not charge a fee for the first bag, the member and team leader can be reimbursed for a second bag. Generally, the second bag is charged at a higher rate.

No reimbursement will be provided for any bag exceeding the 50 pound airline weight limit.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT?

In order to be reimbursed, the incoming members must provide the resource manager an airline baggage fee receipt from the airline carrier to be entitled for reimbursement, which will be reimbursed by the resource manager via the use of a debit card. The member support specialist will prepare the NCCC Form 311 Obligating and Payment Voucher and provide to the resource manager for reimbursement to the member.

For outgoing TLs/ CMs, they should be reimbursed in cash via a TL/STL debit card or available cash that will cover the expected baggage reimbursement costs. Debit card and baggage costs will be determined by the member support specialist after receiving the flight itineraries from AdTrav. Once the cost is determined and placed on the TL/STL debit card, these funds can be withdrawn so that the TLs/CMs flying out can receive a cash-advance reimbursement for which a receipt is not necessary. After all, the members will be flying home and unable to show their receipt for baggage costs. The TL/CM sign for said debit card or cash advancement using NCCC Form 311 Obligating and Payment Voucher, which will be prepared by the member support specialist and used as a receipt to account for the cash-advance reimbursement on the TL/STL Project Accounting Record during close-out.

c. Bus

The use of a bus is highly discouraged and requires authorization by the region director. This is due to increased cost, transportation time, and scheduling difficulty.

d. Plane

If the trip is over 50 miles between the member's HOR and campus, an airline ticket will be purchased by the campus' member support specialist and provided to the member. At the request of the member, a bus or rail ticket will be purchased, but only if it is less costly to the government. Members are allowed reimbursement for transportation to the terminal when traveling over 50 miles between the HOR and the airport or bus for the one-way trip at the current authorized mileage rate, as determined by the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). Mileage will be verified by an AmeriCorps NCCC staff member.

2. Travel via Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

Members choosing to travel by privately owned vehicles will be reimbursed at the mileage rate determined by the Rand McNally Tripmaker. This reimbursement is intended to cover transportation expenses (it may not cover all costs associated with lodging/subsistence). The total amount claimed cannot exceed \$275 plus a \$3.00 debit card service fee. The mileage rate usually changes from year to year. Mileage is authorized for only one member per vehicle. If the member is a passenger traveling in another member's POV, the passenger member is entitled to \$0.10 per mile, with a maximum of \$90. All mileage is computed on the basis of dis-



tances determined by the AmeriCorps NCCC staff member. Mitigating circumstances, such as detours for road construction or adverse weather conditions, will be considered provided written justification is submitted with the travel claim. Rental vehicles, such as cars or moving vans, will be considered under the same policy as POVs.

3. Other Options

If approved in advance by the region/deputy region directors, departing members may elect to purchase transportation tickets with personal funds and be reimbursed by submitting a Corporation Form 1 Payment Voucher with the appropriate transportation receipts. The member will be reimbursed only up to either the cost of the ticket pur-

chased, or the cost of a similar government fare ticket, whichever is less, based on the fare between the HOR and the campus. This option does not apply to Early Termination Travel. If a member decides to stay within the area of the campus after graduation, the member has up to 30 days after graduation to purchase tickets for departure travel and receive reimbursement for a ticket purchased with personal funds.

4. Miscellaneous Expenses

The shipment of personal belongings is a member responsibility. Members will not be reimbursed for the shipment of any items to or from the campus. Campuses are not authorized to ship a member's personal belongings.

