



2023-2024 Member Candidate Fact Sheet

AmeriCorps Community Food Fellows – UGA Office of Service-Learning

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a federally-funded national service program modeled after the Peace Corps. AmeriCorps allows U.S. citizens to serve their country at home, meet a critical community need, gain professional experience, and earn an education award to pay for school (or pay back loans). There are several different AmeriCorps programs. The Community Food Fellows are AmeriCorps State members and provide direct services to the Athens area. **AmeriCorps positions are temporary service positions, not permanent employment.**

How does AmeriCorps fit in with the UGA Office of Service-Learning?

While UGA's Office of Service-Learning has had an AmeriCorps VISTA network for a decade, this is our first year with AmeriCorps State grant-funded members. Funding comes from AmeriCorps (formerly known as the Corporation for National and Community Service – CNCS) through Georgia Serves (aka Georgia Commission on Service and Volunteerism - GCSV). This is federal funding, so it may not be available every year. Our grant is routed through the UGA Research Foundation (UGARF) with support from UGA's Office of Sponsored Projects.

Legally, AmeriCorps members are not considered employees of the sponsoring agency (UGA). However, AmeriCorps Community Food Fellows members are on the UGA payroll in order to receive their living allowance and are subject to UGA Human Resources policies. Additional details are provided in the Member Service Agreement. There are strict rules about duties and responsibilities of AmeriCorps members versus UGA employees. There is additional paperwork related to AmeriCorps that you will need to complete.

What will I do as an AmeriCorps member?

As part of a cohort of up to 20 AmeriCorps Community Food Fellows, you will be learning about and providing services to help with community food growing/production, reduction of local food waste, providing meals and food out to clients and organizations to combat food insecurity and hunger, community outreach/education, and more! Your term of service is 900 hours, starting no sooner than the beginning of September 2023 and concluding by the end of July 2024. We anticipate that your schedule will include a combination of large group, small group, and individual activities. AmeriCorps State members primarily provide direct service but your hours will also include training and meetings; members can support fundraising efforts that are related to the direct services they provide, but hours toward fundraising cannot exceed 10% of the total hours. Training cannot exceed 20% of your time.

What will I NOT do as an AmeriCorps member?

There are certain things members are not allowed to do while logging service hours. These are called prohibited activities. A list of the prohibited activities can be found here -

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV/part-2520/section-2520.65>



It is important that you fully review these prohibited activities. In addition to the prohibited activities at this link, the following are also prohibited:

- **Census Activities.** AmeriCorps members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the Census, education about the importance of the Census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives.
- **Election and Polling Activities.** AmeriCorps members may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities. AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while engaging in any of the above activities on their personal time. If you have any questions about the prohibited activities, please contact the Program Coordinator.

AmeriCorps Lingo

- **AmeriCorps:** AmeriCorps is pronounced like the Marine Corps or Peace Corps. It is *not* pronounced like "Corpse." In writing, the "A" and "C" are always capitalized, and it always has the "s" at the end.
- **Service:** AmeriCorps members are not legally considered employees of the organization where they serve. We do not use the word "work" to describe what you do; it is **service**. AmeriCorps State members serve with UGA through the Office of Service-Learning.
- **Term of Service:** This refers to the time period members serve. The time period is specified in the *Member Service Agreement*. Some members may have terms of service that are different lengths of time. Individuals may be allowed to serve multiple terms as an AmeriCorps State member. The UGA Community Food Fellows AmeriCorps State term of service is 900 hours, intended to be over 11 months-- specifically, September through July. In some cases, your term may be shorter than 11 months (e.g., if you start late), but you must finish your service by July 31.
- **Living Allowance:** Members receive a monthly living allowance or stipend, not a paycheck or salary. This amount is the same every month. Members receive this at the end of the month. UGA requires that this payment is delivered by direct deposit into an account of your choice. Members only receive a living allowance while actively serving.

Member Requirements

National Service Criminal History Check: To serve as an AmeriCorps member, you must complete and pass three criminal history checks (see below). **You cannot start until all three of these have cleared.** There is no cost to you for these checks.



- **UGA Criminal History Check:** Accepted members also will be sent an email from UGA or its background check vendor to enter your personal information to initiate the UGA background check. It is important that you check your email daily after being offered the position, including your spam or junk folder. Failure to respond to this email will significantly delay your start time. This check is required by UGA.
- **FBI Fingerprint-based check:** This is completed through the AmeriCorps vendor Fieldprint at a Fieldprint Livescan location (usually the UPS Store), NOT at your local law enforcement agency. The Program Coordinator or Business Manager will provide written directions for this process. You will set up an appointment online at a local vendor (UPS store or similar) and provide your fingerprints in person. This check is required by AmeriCorps.
- **National Sex Offender Registry Check (NSOPW) & State Checks:** This is completed through a vendor called Truescreen. The Program Coordinator will order this. You will receive an email from Truescreen with directions to do the following: enter your personal information and upload a copy of your government-issued ID (i.e., driver's license). The state check covers the state where you will serve (Georgia) and your current state of residence (if you currently live outside of Georgia). You may also have to upload a signed form as well. This check is required by AmeriCorps.

Enrollment in My AmeriCorps Portal: The My AmeriCorps portal is an online system that enrolls you in the AmeriCorps system. This is how AmeriCorps verifies your citizenship and social security number, how you request loan forbearance, and where you will access your education award upon successful completion of your term. Before starting your term, you will create a My AmeriCorps account, develop an application for the position, and formally apply for the position through this portal, as well as through the UGA jobs portal. The Program Coordinator will provide you with written directions if needed.

Service Hours Requirement: Half-time members are required to log 900 hours to successfully complete their term, be eligible for the education award, and to qualify to serve additional terms of service. While this does not have to be the same number of hours every week, members starting September 1 would need to average about 82 hours every month to be on track for completion by July 31. If you get behind one month, you need to make it up the next month. If you start after September 1, you will need to log extra hours to catch up, ensuring you meet your required hours by July 31. (We anticipate that there may be additional needs by our local community partners for service during the summer months, as well, for members who need to complete extra hours for make-up.) If you complete your hours before July, you would not receive any living allowance for any months you are not serving.

Member Benefits: See <https://www.americorps.gov/serve/american/american-state-national#benefits>

- **Living Allowance:** The monthly living allowance is **\$981.82** for half-time members. The living allowance is taxed, so these are the amounts before taxes are taken out. To



receive the monthly living allowance, you must be serving actively. Serving actively means logging 20 hours per week (= half-time). You receive the same amount of living allowance per month no matter what day you start or end your service, and regardless of whether you do exactly these hours each week. If you complete your hours earlier than July, you would not receive a living allowance for any months after you finish service. If you start late, you would likewise only receive the allowance during your active service months.

- **Segal Education Award:** Members who complete the required hours will receive an education award equal to the Pell Grant (0.5 for half-time = \$3,447.50). The education award can be used to pay current educational expenses at eligible schools and at certain GI Bill-approved educational programs for veterans. The award can also be used to repay qualified student loans. (It is your responsibility to determine if your school or loan accepts the award.) Members who are at least 55 years old at the start of service may also transfer the award to a child, stepchild, grandchild, or foster child.
 - Individuals can earn the total value of 2.0 education awards, maximum, for multiple terms of service. You have seven years to use your award. For detailed information visit <https://www.americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more>
 - You will not receive an education award if you do not finish your required hours. You will not even receive a partial education award. **The education award is taxed when you use it.** The year you use any of your award you will receive a 1099 from AmeriCorps.
- **Loan Forbearance & Accrued Interest Payment:** This means you may be eligible to postpone repayment of your qualified student loan while serving. While interest may continue to accrue during your service, if you successfully complete the term of service the National Service Trust will pay all or a portion of the qualified loan's interest that accrued during your service. See more at the AmeriCorps website.
- **Health Insurance:** Half-time members are NOT eligible for health insurance through AmeriCorps.
- **Childcare:** Half-time members are NOT eligible for childcare assistance.

What am I committing to?

By serving as an AmeriCorps State member with UGA, you are making a good faith commitment to serve your full term of service and to complete your required service hours. By serving as an AmeriCorps member, you will gain valuable skills and experience that will assist you with your future career goals, while helping combat food insecurity and food waste in our community. We ask that you be open to personal and professional growth and that you follow through with



your commitment to serving our community and successfully completing your AmeriCorps term of service.

By signing below, I indicate that I understand the information above, have reviewed the prohibited activities, and have addressed any questions to the Program Coordinator.

Signature

Printed Name

Candidate Signature Date

Program Coordinator Signature

Program Coordinator Signature Date

NOTES:

- All interview candidates should review this Fact Sheet prior to their interview.
- Any candidate offered an AmeriCorps position must sign to confirm that they have read and understand the information on this Fact Sheet before an official offer is given.