



# College Access Corps

A Washington/Oregon Campus Compact AmeriCorps Program



## Campus Compact of Oregon College Access Corps (CAC) Member Frequently Asked Questions

### What do Campus Compact of Oregon CAC Members do?

Campus Compact CAC Members work on a variety of projects supporting local economically disadvantaged youth to become engaged in their education, learn more about the college application and financial aid process, and become academically prepared for higher education and post-secondary life. Placed on college campuses, non-profit organizations or K-12 institutions, CAC Members will focus on:

- Establishing and strengthening campus-community partnerships with organizations that address the needs of economically disadvantaged youth
- Recruiting, training, and placing college student volunteers as college access coaches
- Work with college student coaches to provide at least 15 hours of college access interventions to each economically disadvantaged youth supported by the site
- Planning and coordinating national days of service

### What are the goals of the Campus Compact CAC Program?

- To recruit and train 500 college students to act as college access coaches that provide at least 15 hours of college access intervention to 4,500 ED K-12 youth.
- To have at least 70% of participating ED K-12 youth report, through a pre- and post- survey, improvement in academic engagement, academic preparedness for post-secondary education, and knowledge about how to apply to and pay for post-secondary education.
- To recruit 1,080 volunteers for National Days of Service and other community service events.

### What benefits do AmeriCorps CAC Members receive?

- A living allowance paid for by the Corporation for National and Community Service and distributed by Campus Compact in equal installments every two weeks. To receive this benefit, Members must be active in the program as demonstrated in monthly timesheets and other required documents. The living allowance is not a salary or a wage and it is taxed. The value of the living allowance will be \$12,630.00 over 10.5 months of service.
- Health benefits if the member is not already covered by their parents or spouse's insurance or is ineligible for Medicaid in the State of Oregon.
- Childcare assistance (if eligible)
- Members will receive an education award of up to \$5,730.00 upon successful completion of service.
- Interest payments on loans placed in forbearance. If the Member has received forbearance on a qualified student loan during the term of service, the National Service Trust will repay a portion or all of the interest that accrued during the term of service upon successful completion of the program. The interest is taxed.
- Loan deferment is available based on economic hardship.
- Workers' compensation for in-service injuries.
- Site-specific benefits can include reduced housing, a meal plan at the school, or a parking or bus pass.

### Who pays the living allowance and how provides the benefits?

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides the living allowance, health insurance and workers' compensation to the AmeriCorps Members. The living allowance is paid in equal

installments every two weeks. CNCS offers loan forbearance (if applicable) and provides the education award or cash stipend upon successful completion of the term of service.

### **Can sites pay the Member to subsidize their small living allowance?**

Yes. An AmeriCorps Member commits to a year of service, not a regular job. They are provided with a small living allowance to cover basic living expenses so they can devote the year to service. However, the host site or the community partner may choose to subsidize the member's position with an additional stipend or in other ways:

- Help AmeriCorps Member find affordable rentals or alternative living arrangements
- Provide a vehicle for AmeriCorps Member to use for service or a bus pass
- Provide AmeriCorps Member with reduced cost or free Membership to a gym/community center
- Provide AmeriCorps Member lunch tickets to the school or office cafeteria

### **Can AmeriCorps Members hold a second job or go to school while in service?**

Yes. The focus of the member's year should be on their service but AmeriCorps Members in the College Access Corps can work up to 16 hours per week at an outside job, as long as it is scheduled on non-service times and does not interfere with their service. Additionally, CAC Members can also choose to go to school and take up to 8 credit hours per term again as long as it does not interfere with their service term.

### **What is the educational award and how does it work?**

When a Member successfully completes a term of service, they are eligible for an Education Award of \$5,730. Campus Compact will submit a form to CNCS stating the Member has completed their year of service and is eligible for an education award. CNCS then sends the Member a voucher in the mail and the award is posted on the Member's my.americorps.gov portal. The Member can take this voucher to any Title IV educational institution to pay for individual classes, enrollment or to pay back student loans. The institution bills CNCS for the educational costs. The Member has up to seven years after completing the term of service to use the education award. It may be used in whole or in part over time. For example, a Member may use \$1,000 to pay off an existing student loan, return to school next year and use \$2,000 to complete a bachelor's degree, take a year off to travel in Europe and then use the balance to return to school for a master's degree.

Things to remember about the education award:

- It is taxable as income
- It is non-transferable (some exceptions apply)

### **What restrictions are placed on AmeriCorps service?**

AmeriCorps members may not conduct or promote any political causes or candidates, religious perspectives, nor run or support elections or voter registration drives. Members may also not conduct or promote abortion services. These policies are in effect while members are serving as AmeriCorps members, during service hours. For a full list of restrictions review the prohibited activities list available on the AmeriCorps website.

### **Is the Member a volunteer or an employee?**

Neither. He or she is an AmeriCorps National Service Member of the Oregon Campus Compact AmeriCorps College Access Corps program, who is completing his or her service at your site. It is important to make a distinction between the AmeriCorps Member and regular staff at the organization. Please do not use the term "employee", "employment", "staff", "wages", "paycheck" or any other term that implies the Member's service is employment.

### **What hours should the Member serve?**

AmeriCorps Members are not required to serve a regular 8-5 Monday to Friday schedule. However, they need to accomplish the goals and members must complete BOTH 10.5 months of service and 1700 hours of service to be eligible for their education award. This equates to roughly 40 hours/week for the entire term

of service. If a member works overtime or under-time one week they may comp or flex their time at a later date with approval of their site supervisor.

The calendar alerts Members and supervisors of Campus Compact/AmeriCorps events. Campus Compact recommends that Members and supervisors use this calendar as a guideline to plan the Member's schedule. Things to keep in mind:

- Members will be allowed reasonable and appropriate personal time off with prior approval of the Site Supervisor.
- The Member is entitled to the same federal holidays as employees of the host site without affecting their living allowance. However, holiday hours do not count toward the service hours required for a post-service education award. Extra care should be taken to ensure that the Member is fully aware of Host Site's holidays prior to starting her/his term of service. School breaks, including winter, summer, and spring break, are not extended to the Member as breaks. The Member should have an adequate work plan in place to ensure s/he engages in meaningful service activities during school break periods.

### **What training will Campus Compact or CNCS provide for the Members?**

All Members are required to attend a 3-day Orientation/In-Service Trainings (IST) to Members in September as well as inservice trainings in December and June. These trainings are between 2 – 3 days long, and include education about service-learning, campus-community partnership building, recruitment and support, planning service days, evaluating service programs and much more. Additionally, Campus Compact CAC Staff hosts mandatory and optional webinars each month.

### **What happens if a Member has an extended illness or accident?**

The site supervisor, the Member and Campus Compact CAC staff can work together to create a plan for the Member to make-up the missed service time. The Member may be able to pick up more evening and weekend service or he or she may choose to serve during a regularly scheduled vacation day. Members may also have access to emergency leave as approved by the Oregon State Office. If the illness or accident makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the Member to complete his or her service, the Member can withdraw from the program for compelling personal circumstances.

### **What happens if a Member quits?**

AmeriCorps Members commit to a 10.5 month service term with the program and if they exit early without approval from Campus Compact and CNCS, he or she will not receive any portion of their education award and will be exited from the program for "cause". If a Member leaves early the placement site will not be able to replace them for the service year.

### **Can a Member complete his or her term of service early?**

No, Members must commit to serving a full 10.5 months even if they have already completed 1700 hours.

### **Drug Free Work Place**

The Drug Free Workplace Act requires you, as a sub-grantee of a Federal program to give notice about the Act to employees and Members and to conduct a drug free awareness program. If one of the AmeriCorps Members is arrested for or convicted of a drug offense, he or she must notify the site supervisor and Campus Compact in writing within five days and Campus Compact will take appropriate action (including suspension and referral to a drug rehabilitation program, or release for cause consistent with the AmeriCorps' rules on termination and suspension of service).