



AmeriCorps Service Site Application Guidance

Application Instructions and Guidance

Organizations applying to become a service site partner and host an Environmental Education Leadership Corps member should carefully review the following information and complete their application by Friday May 16th. Application must be sent to eelcorps@gmail.com. Any questions related to the application should be directed to Ashley Mike or Willa Dawn Bayne.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides thousands of Americans with an opportunity to give back to their communities. AmeriCorps members serve in nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations. Since the program was created in 1994, over 250,000 individuals have served their communities and country as AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, student-loan forbearance, health coverage, end of service Segal Education Award, and childcare for those who qualify. There are hundreds of AmeriCorps programs across the country that provide service to communities in focus areas such as Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures, Disaster Services, Education, and Environmental Education. AmeriCorps programs are funded by the federal AmeriCorps agency and the Serve Kentucky State Commission for service.

What is the Environmental Education Leadership Corps?

EELCorps is an AmeriCorps program focused on providing and expanding environmental education in Kentucky. EELCorps is administered by the Kentucky Environmental Education Council, a state agency dedicated to environmental education that is housed within the Education and Labor Cabinet. The EELCorps mission is to cultivate environmental literacy in Kentucky by supporting environmental education to foster meaningful connections with the natural world beyond the classroom. EELCorps AmeriCorps members serve at nonprofits, public agencies, and education and government institutions. Allowable AmeriCorps member service activities focus on education about the environment, which can include educational lessons, programs, and activities, as well as lesson planning, preparation, and outreach.

The program year begins September 1st and ends the following August 31st.

Hosting an AmeriCorps Member

Hosting an AmeriCorps member is a collaborative effort between service sites and EELCorps Program Staff. Service sites are responsible, in tandem with program staff, for recruiting, training, and supervising an AmeriCorps member for up to 12 months. EELCorps tentatively has (10) 1700-hour, (7) 900-hour, and (3) 450-hour member slots available in the 2025-2026 program year.

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1700-hour members serve full-time averaging about 37.5 hours per week. 900-hour and 450-hour members serve a modified schedule. To serve with EELCorps AmeriCorps, members must demonstrate a commitment to serve their community, pass a three-step criminal history background check, and be at least 18 years of age. EELCorps welcomes all applicants without regard to race, skin color, nationality, social or ethnic orientation, religion, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or familial status, genetic information, disability, or status regarding public assistance or military service.

Service Site Contribution

Service sites are required to provide a site contribution for each member slot awarded to participate in the program. This cost is nonrefundable regardless of member status and supports the goals of the EELCorps program.

Member Slot	Hours	Service Term	Site Contribution Amount (per slot)
Full-time	1700	12 months	\$8,925*
Half-time	900	6-12 months	\$4,725*
Quarter-time	450	3-12 months	\$2,480*

***All site contribution amounts are pending until final grant award for the 2025-2026 service term.**

Member Recruitment + Supervisor Training

Once sites have been selected, you will be provided with recruitment guidance and materials. Sites need to review the guidance prior to recruiting. The best recruitment efforts for EELCorps candidates focus on recruiting within the communities where service site partners are located. Thus, the materials we create are meant to support and supplement your recruitment efforts. A training series for site supervisors will be provided no later than June. The series will include self-paced virtual trainings, a site inspection, and quarterly virtual meetings. Completion of trainings, inspection, and attendance of quarterly meetings/trainings is mandatory for any organization wishing to host an AmeriCorps member. If the designated site supervisor is unavailable, please reach out to EELCorps program staff, and another representative that will work with the AmeriCorps member may be approved to attend the training.

Program Performance Measures + Member Experience

Every member position includes the provision of direct-service activities that relate to environmental education. The member position description addresses the following performance measures:

- Members will collectively provide 20 minutes or more of environmental education to 15,000 individuals.
- 5,250 of those individuals will report learning something new from the lesson, program, or activity which they participated in.

To measure the advancement of these performance measures, members will utilize a Participant Survey provided by EELCorps program staff for any lesson, program, or activity which they lead or co-lead that is 20 minutes or more. Use of the survey is required, and site supervisors are required to ensure that members are using the survey and being given ample time in lessons, programs, and activities to do so (completion of the survey takes 5-10 minutes).

In addition to the performance measures outlined above, EELCorps members are required to track the total number of individuals who receive environmental education from their service, regardless of program length.

It is the goal of EELCorps to provide a rewarding experience for members that allows them to feel supported during their service term, and beyond, as well as feel equipped to be confident environmental educators. EELCorps utilizes member engagement tools such as 1:1 meetings, monthly check-ins, and

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networking platforms to garner member feedback and ensure members feel supported by program staff. Members exit service prepared for entry into the environmental education professional field; Full-time members are offered rigorous professional development through the Professional Environmental Educator Certification course, which is nationally accredited through the North American Association for Environmental Education and consists of four workshops that train participants on best practices for educating, utilizing the curriculum materials provided, and working with learners in a group. All remaining members are offered curriculum certification for the nationally utilized environmental education curricula Projects Wet, Wild, and Learning Tree, which is popularly used by professional environmental educators and classroom science teachers at all learning levels. Additionally, all members are trained in the environmental education Guidelines for Excellence: Community Engagement Guidelines, which prepares members to work in and WITH the communities they serve.

AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

- Attempting to influence legislation;
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- Providing a direct benefit to—
 - o A business organized for profit;
 - o A labor union;
 - o A partisan political organization;
 - o A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - o An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 3.g. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

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- CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Restrictions on AmeriCorps Positions

Non-Duplication: Grant funds may not be used to duplicate services that are available in the locality of a Program or project. EELCorps members may not conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a state or local government agency in which the Grantee entity

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resides. You cannot duplicate services that are already taking place in a locality i.e. a program is operating without AmeriCorps funds and the organization wishes to continue the same program with no expansions or improvements in service with AmeriCorps funds instead. If you wanted to replicate the program in a new area, reaching new beneficiaries, or improve the service delivery because of an AmeriCorps member, that would not be duplication.

Non-Displacement: An AmeriCorps member may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits.

Examples include:

- Your organization used to have an environmental educator, but due to budget cuts this year, you needed to let go of that person. You now want to partner with EELCorps to have an AmeriCorps member complete all the responsibilities that the employee used to do. This is displacement of employees.
- Your organization decides to enroll an environmental education coordinator as an AmeriCorps member – hey, it’s cheaper! - this is displacement of employees (and the former employee probably wouldn’t stay anyway).
- Your organization has a volunteer that comes in on Mondays to teach environmental literacy classes. You decide to dismiss your volunteer so your AmeriCorps members can take over those classes – so you don’t have to manage volunteers anymore. This is displacement of a volunteer.
- Your organization has an employee that is out sick for two days and staff, including an AmeriCorps member, helps to pick up the work while the employee was out. This is not duplication or displacement because the employee is presumed to return to work.

Application Design

- Part One: EELCorps AmeriCorps Service Site Application
- Part Two: In-Depth Narratives and Service Year Pre-Work (will be assigned after site selection)

Application Timeline

Service Site Application Due	May 16th, 2025
Application Grading Window	May 19-23, 2025
Sites Selection Notice goes out	May 27, 2025
In-Depth Narratives and Pre-work due for review	June 13, 2025
Service Site Agreement released to sites for review and signature.	June 9, 2025
Service Site Agreements due.	August 1, 2025

Submission Information

Application must be sent via email to eelcorps@gmail.com by Friday, May 16th using the documents and templates provided. Please use the subject line “Service Site Application – organization name”.

Any application submitted that misses the deadline and/or without all the required fields will be considered nonresponsive and will not be reviewed. Organizations should be intentional about completing the narratives specifically for AmeriCorps.

Questions can be directed to Ashley Mike (Ashley.mike@ky.gov) or Willa Dawn Bayne (willa.bayne@ky.gov).