

## AmeriCorps: Youth in Service FAQ

### **What is the term of service for the YIS AmeriCorps Program?**

The program runs for 10 ½ months, from mid-August through June.

### **How many positions are available with the Community Youth Services YIS AmeriCorps Program?**

There are 20 member positions throughout Thurston County with members serving individually at either a school based site or non-profit organization.

### **What sort of work do YIS members do?**

Members perform the following activities:

- Support and Mentoring for youth and families at-risk
- Capacity Building for local non-profit organizations (volunteer recruitment, donation gathering and community partnership building)
- Coordinate and participate in local community service projects with your team

### **What is the age requirement for the program?**

YIS members must be 18-25 years of age at the start of the program.

### **What are the eligibility requirements to be a YIS AmeriCorps Member?**

Members must be 18-25 years old and be eligible to work in the US (citizen or registered alien). Members must have a high school diploma or GED and should be passionate about helping youth and families. A National Service Criminal History check will be required for those selected.

### **Will I be serving with a team or individually?**

The CYS YIS Program is a team-based program with both large group and small group elements. Although members serve individually at their sites, they also participate in team based training and planning days several times per month. Members are expected to participate in both groups fully.

### **What else do YIS AmeriCorps members do?**

Members participate in trainings with large and small groups. These trainings are largely hands-on, experiential and focused on applying what is learned to their service. This federally funded program requires members to collect and report data on how their services are affecting the community they are serving. Training on these procedures is provided. Service Projects are an integral part of the program's emphasis on community involvement; members are expected to participate in community service projects for all National Service Days.

### **What sort of environment will I be working in?**

Members serve in local non-profit agencies and schools. Each site has a different workplace culture and professional expectations. Please refer to individual position descriptions for more information. Adaptability to different workplace environments is very helpful.

### **Where are the YIS sites?**

Non-profit organizations and elementary schools located in Olympia and throughout Thurston County, Washington. This area is the southernmost reach of the Puget Sound, includes the state Capital and is characterized by both urban/suburban and rural populations.

**What time of day do I serve? Or, what are the hours?**

Members serve 8 hour days with primarily day time service hours. Occasionally sites will require evening and weekend hours. Please refer to individual position descriptions for more information about a specific site and their hours.

**Do members serving at school sites get school holidays off?**

No, members serving in schools will serve during any school breaks except for federal holidays.

**Are there any part-time positions available?**

No, all positions are full time, 40 hours per week.

**How much are members paid?**

Members are paid a monthly living stipend of \$1,195. Federal Income Tax, Social Security Tax and Workers Compensation are withheld from the monthly living allowance.

**Does the AmeriCorps program provide housing?**

No, AmeriCorps Members are expected to provide their own housing.

**Are childcare benefits provided?**

Yes, based on family income. **All income** in each household, **including** the AmeriCorps living stipend, counts in your income qualification. Childcare benefits are available for participating full-time AmeriCorps members **if** they are income qualified by Washington State guidelines, need childcare to participate and the children are 12 years old or younger.

**Is health care provided?**

Yes, there is a medical plan available that applies to the AmeriCorps member **only**. Spouses and children are not covered by the health plan. Per the Affordable Care Act, individuals are required to be enrolled in a plan that qualifies as minimum essential coverage. If an incoming member does not have insurance there is a plan available to AmeriCorps members **only**. Spouses and children are not covered by the AmeriCorps health plan. Alternatively, members may qualify for Washington Apple Health if they meet income requirements.

**Is dental and vision insurance provided?**

No, dental and vision benefits are not available.

**Can I have another job while serving?**

Members are allowed to hold a part-time job while serving. Additional employment must not interfere with service.

**Are there any education benefits associated with the YIS AmeriCorps Program?**

YES! YIS AmeriCorps members earn an education award of \$5,815 after successfully completing a minimum of 1,700 hours of service and 10½ months in the program. Awards earned are valid for 7 years and can be used at any accredited college, technical school or to pay back accredited education loans. Education awards are counted as taxable income.

**What if I have current student loans to pay? Is there assistance with that?**

Yes, members that have current accredited college loans that are not in arrears are eligible to place them into forbearance during their AmeriCorps service.

**Will I receive any training to help me with my service?**

Yes, members participate in trainings throughout their year of service, free of charge, in a team setting. Members are required to attend pre-service training in Olympia at the start of the service year.

Training is facilitated by AmeriCorps staff, other expert trainers, and returning AmeriCorps Members. Training topics may include but are not limited to the following: Volunteer Recruitment, Family Involvement, Multiple Learning Styles, Diversity, Effective Communication, Team Building, Leadership Skills, How to do a Press Release & PSA, Service Project Planning and Life After AmeriCorps.

**Can I go to school while serving?**

Members are allowed to attend school during their term of service. Courses must not interfere with the member's service.

**Does the living stipend interfere with current social service assistance and/or health insurance?**

The living stipend **does not** count as income for purpose of eligibility for TANF grants, food stamps or section 8 housing. It may count as income for SSI or other state funded programs.

**Are there other AmeriCorps programs?**

Yes. There are 100's of AmeriCorps programs across the nation. Please visit [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) to find out more.

**Will I be provided with a uniform (like City Year)?**

Members are provided with AmeriCorps branded clothing (t-shirt and/or sweatshirt) and a nametag with the AmeriCorps logo. Members are expected to follow their site's dress code and wear something that identifies them as an AmeriCorps member (clothing item, name tag, and/or button).

**Do I get to choose the location I want to serve in?**

After successfully completing a program interview, members have a choice of interview sites. Please note that

**Do I need transportation?**

Some service sites require their member to have a vehicle and/or valid car insurance. Please refer to individual site descriptions for more information.

**Are there opportunities for me to develop leadership and facilitation skills?**

Yes, members are encouraged and provided opportunities to facilitate trainings and take on leadership roles.

**Will I be required to travel out of town?**

No. YIS members are not required to travel outside of Thurston County, except for an AmeriCorps event that takes place in the fall and transportation will be provided or expenses reimbursed.

**Is vacation and sick leave available?**

Members are given 60 hours of leave, with the opportunity to earn additional leave time totaling up to 80 hours.

**What holidays would I have off?**

Members receive 9 National Holidays off throughout the service year. They are Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day & the day after, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day and the 4th of July.