



EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS SUMMER CORPS PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the application deadline?

The application period opens on **December 18, 2012**. Completed applications must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. PDT on Monday, March 18, 2013**. All parts of the application, including documents and an electronic signature from staff at your host site, are required by this deadline. Late or incomplete applications will **not** be accepted.

2. On what timeline will the applications be evaluated?

We will evaluate applications on a rolling basis, starting from the application opening date of December 18, 2012.

3. Am I eligible to serve as a Summer Corps member?

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a current student at an [Equal Justice Works member law school](#). To see if your law school is a member, please visit [our website](#).
- Obtain an unpaid placement at a [qualifying nonprofit organization](#). Equal Justice Works will not find a placement for you. To find a placement, we suggest consulting with your law school's career office, looking at postings on [PSLawNet](#) or [Idealist](#), or directly contacting the offices of the organizations you are interested in working for to ask if they need help for the summer.

4. Does Equal Justice Works make any exceptions to deadlines?

No.

5. What are my chances for being selected?

We receive approximately 2,000 applications for approximately 350 slots.

6. When does the Summer Corps 2012 program start and end?

- You **must** start between May 1 and May 31, 2013.
- Your term of service must end, having completed the minimum 300 hours of service, no later than August 31, 2013.
- You must provide a start and end date for your term of service in your application. You must inform us immediately if these dates change.
- Accurate start and end dates are AmeriCorps requirements.

7. Is Summer Corps an AmeriCorps funded program?

Yes. For more information on AmeriCorps, its benefits and rules, please visit www.AmeriCorps.gov and view the information [for individuals](#).

8. Will I be paid for my Summer Corps service?

You will not receive a cash stipend for your Summer Corps service. However, you will receive a \$1,175 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for your service. The Education Award is a voucher that can be applied toward student loans or current tuition. The Education Award is paid directly from AmeriCorps to your lender or school; you will not receive a check. You have up to seven years to use the Education Award, and it is taxable in the year it is used. Please see [here](#) for further details regarding the Education Award.

Please see “Can I receive outside compensation as a Summer Corps member?” below for information regarding additional funding possibilities for your service.

9. What is the criminal background check procedure?

AmeriCorps requires that all applicants must consent in writing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check. In accordance with federal law, Summer Corps applicants will be required

to undergo the following criminal history checks:

- FBI nationwide fingerprint-based criminal history check;
- State criminal registry checks in the state of service and state of residence at time of application; and
- National Sex Offender Public Registry search.

Equal Justice Works will conduct and review the results of each National Service Criminal History Check. Selection in the Summer Corps program is contingent upon Equal Justice Works' review of the background check results.

Having a criminal conviction is not an automatic bar to service. Each application is reviewed on a case by case basis.

10. Why do I have to sign the Summer Corps contract before I have been accepted?

Acceptance of the terms of the contract is a prerequisite for being considered for the program. If the applicant is not selected to participate in the Summer Corps program, the contract will be void. If you are selected to participate in the program, we will enroll you in the AmeriCorps database as a Summer Corps member based on the information you provide in your application and contract.

11. How and when do I find out if I have been accepted into the Summer Corps program?

We will inform you of your status as soon as we have made a decision. If you have not yet heard from us, it is because we have not reviewed your application or because you have been placed on a wait list. No inquiries as to your status will be accepted.

12. Do I have to find a host organization before applying to Summer Corps, or can Equal Justice Works help me find a placement?

Yes, you must find your own placement at a [qualifying host organization](#). Equal Justice Works does **not** find placements for Summer Corps members. To find a placement, we suggest consulting with your law school's career office, looking at postings on [PSLawNet](#) or [Idealist](#), or directly contacting the offices of the organizations you are interested in working for to ask if they need help for the summer.

13. Geographically, where can I serve?

You may serve at qualifying host organizations in the United States, U.S. territories and tribal reservations.

14. What is a qualifying host organization?

Qualifying host organizations include:

- Organizations that are already Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and Equal Justice Works Fellows;
- Nonprofit organizations serving veterans, military families, homeowners facing foreclosure, victims of disaster, or organizations engaged in medical-legal partnerships;
- Nonprofit legal service organizations receiving funding from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC); and/or
- Nonprofit civil rights organizations.

The following **do not qualify** as Summer Corps host organizations:

- Federal government agencies (such as federal defender offices, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Justice);
- Government agencies (such as district attorney's offices, offices of the attorney general);
- Internationally-focused or internationally-based organizations;
- Organizations primarily engaged in lobbying or impact litigation;
- Environmental organizations;
- Judicial clerkships; and
- Private law firms of any sort.

15. Is my project eligible for Summer Corps funding?

Your service project must adhere to the following guidelines:

- You must provide direct legal services to low-income and underserved individuals. This includes conducting intake, performing client and witness interviews, assisting with courtroom representation, and carrying out legal research and writing.
- Your project is **not eligible** if you will do pure policy work or pure environmental work.

You may not engage in any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps during your service hours, including but not limited to:

- Proselytizing or engaging in religious instruction;
- Attempting to influence legislation (lobbying);
- Assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing;
- Engaging in partisan political activities including elections and voter registration drives;
- Referring or promoting abortion services; and/or
- Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, including small businesses.

You are welcome to do any of these things on your own time as long as you are not receiving AmeriCorps service hours and/or wearing AmeriCorps identifying logos. All Summer Corps members must sign a document certifying they do not partake in any prohibited activities throughout the course of their project.

16. What are Equal Justice Works and AmeriCorps priority project areas?

Current AmeriCorps priority areas include veterans issues, disaster relief, and foreclosure issues. As an AmeriCorps grantee, Equal Justice Works has made these areas priorities as well. Therefore, we are looking for applicants to the Summer Corps program with projects in these areas.

17. Can I receive outside compensation as a Summer Corps member?

Yes. You may receive a “living allowance” of up to \$4,300, but it **may not** be earned as an hourly wage unless through Federal Work Study. Because Summer Corps is an AmeriCorps program, members cannot receive an hourly wage from their host organization for their service.

Host organizations must distribute a living allowance at regular intervals and in regular increments. Living allowances are only distributed during the member’s term of service and they must cease when the participant successfully concludes the term of service.

If you are receiving funds through a [Federal Work Study](#) Award, you can receive an hourly wage.

You must disclose this amount to Equal Justice Works and, if applicable, ensure that the host organization reduces your living allowance, if any, by the amount of the work-study award. If you

are not sure if your additional source of funding will affect your eligibility for Summer Corps, please contact us at Summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

There are many sources of funding for summer service, including law schools, bar association and public interest fellowship awards. Contact your school's career office, check PSLawNet.org and ask your host organization for additional funding opportunities.

18. What if I have previously served in an AmeriCorps program, including Summer Corps?

Under current AmeriCorps rules, individuals can serve a maximum of four terms of service, no matter the length of each term. However, an individual is limited to earning up to the aggregate sum in dollar value of two full-time (1,700-hour) education awards. Summer Corps is a minimum-time (300-hours) program. Therefore, a previous term of service will not necessarily cause you to reach the limit on education awards or terms of service. To find out if how many terms of service or education awards you have received in the past, please contact AmeriCorps at 1-800-942-2677 or log into your [My AmeriCorps Portal account](#).

19. What are the AmeriCorps prohibited activities?

Pursuant to Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) regulation *45 CFR 2520.65*, members of AmeriCorps programs, including Summer Corps, are prohibited from performing certain activities in the course of their duties, at the request of program staff or in a manner that would be associated with the activities of the AmeriCorps program or CNCS.

These activities include:

- 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:
 - A business organized for profit;
 - A labor union;
 - A partisan political organization;
 - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - An organization engaged in the religious activities described in the bullet above of this section, 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 CNCS may prohibit.

20. Can I participate in AmeriCorps prohibited activities during non-AmeriCorps time?

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the above prohibited activities on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time and using non-CNCS funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.

21. If I am accepted as a Summer Corps member, what will Equal Justice Works expect of me?

As a Summer Corps member, you will be expected to:

- Check your email regularly and respond promptly to inquiries;
- Complete surveys that are sent to you via email;
- View webinars that we send you;
- Update your time log daily;
- Alert us immediately if your Supervisor, start date, end date, or project funding changes;

- Alert us immediately if you need to exit from the program early; and
- Complete the exit procedures within one week of your end date.

22. Do I have to track my hours in the Summer Corps Application Manager (SAM) if I am already tracking my hours at the host organization?

Yes, you should be tracking your daily hours in SAM and through your host site's time tracking system. You will receive notices from Equal Justice Works if we discover that you are not entering hours regularly. This is an AmeriCorps requirement and we will assume that you have unsuccessfully left the program if you fail to enter your daily hours and have not responded to our reminders. An unsuccessful exit from the program can affect your ability to serve in other AmeriCorps programs in the future as well as other Equal Justice Works programs such as our Fellowships programs.

23. Can my Supervisor be an Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellow?

No. If you are located at an Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowship Host Site, you can work with the AmeriCorps Legal Fellow, but they cannot be your Supervisor.

24. Can my Supervisor be a non-attorney staff member?

No. Your Supervisor must be an attorney.