

# EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS 2013 SUMMER CORPS PROGRAM

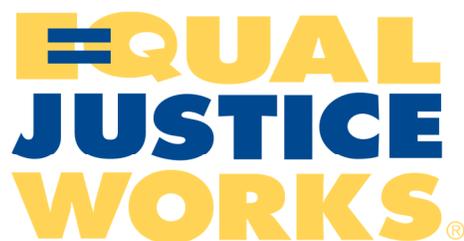
## *Summer Corps Member Guide*

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*Helping Lawyers Help Community*



## Table of Contents

Welcome .....	2
Overview .....	3
Important Reminders.....	3
AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities.....	4
Leaving Service Early.....	5
Mandatory Reporting Instructions .....	5
Objectives.....	5
How to Track Time .....	8
Education Award.....	9
Questions? .....	10

## Welcome

Dear Summer Corps Member,

**Congratulations on being selected to serve as a member of the Equal Justice Works Summer Corps.** This program engages law students around the country who are working to expand the delivery of legal services to those who need it most. Summer Corps is an AmeriCorps-funded program that provides law students with the opportunity to earn an AmeriCorps education award of \$1,175 for dedicating their summers to a qualifying legal project at a nonprofit public interest organization.

Our Summer Corps program exemplifies the mission of Equal Justice Works to create a just society by mobilizing the next generation of lawyers committed to equal justice. We hope that your experience with Summer Corps will be rewarding for you, your organization, and the community you serve. As a Summer Corps member, you will join other public interest-minded law students and gain valuable experience while providing direct legal services and community education for low-income and underserved communities.

Thank you again for your support and commitment to public interest law. Please email us at [summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org) if you have any questions about Summer Corps or any of our other programs or initiatives.

Sincerely,

The Summer Corps Team

## Overview

The purpose of this guide is to let you know what you can expect from Equal Justice Works, and to describe your responsibilities as a Summer Corps Member in order to complete your summer successfully and get your education award.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) developed a series of regulations and requirements by which all AmeriCorps programs and their participants, including Summer Corps Members, must abide. Your assistance in following these regulations and requirements will help Equal Justice Works guarantee that Summer Corps is a success and will ensure that you receive your AmeriCorps education award upon successful completion of your term of service. This *Summer Corps Member Guide*, the [Summer Corps Application Management System \(SAM\)](#) and **program email updates** are designed to provide you with the required information you need to successfully participate in the Summer Corps program.

As a participant in this program, you are:

**An Equal Justice Works Summer Corps Member:** Administered by Equal Justice Works, the Summer Corps program engages law students across the country to spend the summer providing legal services to low-income and underserved individuals and communities.

**An AmeriCorps Member:** Summer Corps is an [AmeriCorps](#) program, funded and regulated by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal entity that administers national and community service programs such as AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and Senior Corps. As a participant, you are therefore an AmeriCorps member, with the rights and responsibilities that follow.

**A Representative of your Host Organization:** Equal Justice Works seeks to increase and improve public interest opportunities at organizations throughout the country. As a representative of your host organization, we know you will provide the highest quality service to your community and your colleagues.

## Important Reminders

Please let us know if for any reason you leave your service or you are thinking of leaving your service.

You **must** complete and submit all exit materials (the time log & final report) online using [SAM](#) by 5 p.m. Eastern time within one week from your last day of service. In no circumstances should exit materials be submitted later than 5 p.m. Eastern time Friday, August 31, 2013. Equal Justice Works must receive all exit materials to ensure that you receive your AmeriCorps education award.

## AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

Summer Corps is an AmeriCorps program. As such, members cannot engage in certain “prohibited activities” during their service hours. Pursuant to regulations of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), 45 C.F.R. 2520.30, 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. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed below on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.

These activities include:

1. Attempting to influence legislation,
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. 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;
7. 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;
8. Providing a direct benefit to:
  - a. A business organized for profit;
  - b. A labor union;
  - c. A partisan political organization;
  - d. 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

- e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 7 of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities.
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive; and
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.

## Leaving Service Early

You must let us know **immediately** if you stop working with your host site, for any reason. While we want everyone to have a productive summer and to take advantage of the AmeriCorps education award, we understand that changes can occur. It is crucial for us to know if service has stopped, so we ask for your full cooperation in keeping us informed. We will be communicating with you throughout the summer to ensure that Equal Justice Works runs a program that complies with AmeriCorps rules and regulations so that we may continue to provide these funds and support law students like you.

## Mandatory Reporting Instructions

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) requires every AmeriCorps program, including Summer Corps, to establish measurable outcomes for each program year. Additionally, CNCS requires every AmeriCorps member to report the total amount of hours they served during their term of service.

At the end of the summer, Equal Justice Works will compile a report of your accomplishments for CNCS. Please be sure to share the challenges and rewards of your summer experience with us when you prepare your required end-of-summer final report. The final report will be available through the [Summer Corps Application Management System \(SAM\)](#).

By keeping track of your activities and accomplishments and reporting them to Equal Justice Works through the final report, you will help us determine whether Summer Corps has met its objectives.

## Objectives

Please keep the following in mind when tracking your accomplishments and preparing your online final report.

The main objective of the Summer Corps program is to provide direct legal services to low-income individuals and communities. Direct legal services may include any and all of the following:

- Conducting intake of individuals to identify and assess legal problems, regardless of whether they become clients;
- Providing supervised advice and/or referrals to individuals, regardless of whether they become clients;
- Assisting a client (anything from making a phone call on their behalf to actual legal representation in an administrative hearing or in court); and/or
- Helping a host site staff member (paralegal, attorney, etc.) assist a client (e.g., research and writing, preparation for administrative or court hearings).

At the end of this summer, you will be asked to complete a Final Report. Note that we understand, as a law student, you are under the supervision of an attorney and that you are frequently contributing to, but not solely responsible for, the outcomes below. If you contributed to the outcome, you may report it. You will be expected to report on the following outcomes:

- General Information
  - Number individuals provided direct legal assistance
  - Number of documented positive outcomes
  - Number of volunteers recruited
  - Description of positive outcomes for your clients (500 word limit)
- Veterans Projects
  - Number of veterans served
  - Number of veterans' family members served
  - Number of veterans served with a housing matter
  - Number of veterans served who become housed, at least in part, because of service (e.g., removing barrier to housing)
  - Number of veterans served who remained in housing because of service
  - Number of veterans who had a barrier to housing removed
  - Number of veterans served to address a barrier to employment
  - Number of veterans that had a barrier to employment removed
  - Number of veterans served that now have access to better healthcare
  - Number of veterans served that had a criminal matter dismissed or expunged
    - Number of veterans served that had fines or other penalties waived or reduced as a result of legal services provided
  - Number of veterans served to address outstanding warrants
    - Number of veterans served that had warrants dismissed as a result of legal services provided
  - Number of veterans served that were able to obtain a government-issued ID as a result of legal services provided
- Disaster Projects
  - Number of individuals served that were affected by disaster
  - Number of individuals served to whom you provided disaster-related legal services
  - Number of position outcomes you achieved for individuals who received disaster-related legal services
  - Number of individuals you assisted with gaining access to housing or income after a disaster

- Number of individuals whose rights you enforced in consumer issues after a disaster, including construction, repair and remodeling contracts
- Number of individuals you assisted with brief legal services and advice after a disaster
- Number of individuals you helped to maintain housing or delay eviction after a disaster
- Foreclosure Projects
  - Number of cases you defended against foreclosure (including loan modification, mediation, other pre-foreclosure assistance, and foreclosure defense)
  - Number of homes you helped saved or foreclosures you helped prevent (including loan modification, mediation, other pre-foreclosure assistance, and foreclosure defense)
  - Number of people whose homes you saved (i.e., all the people living in the home that was saved)
  - Number of individuals in their homes pending the outcomes of the foreclosure cases you worked on (foreclosure delayed as a result of intervention, case isn't finalized)
  - Number of individuals who chose foreclosure, following a legal analysis and the advice you provided
  - Number of individuals who were able to stay in their homes for additional time while planning for transitional housing as a result of legal services you provided
- Medical-Legal Partnerships Projects
  - Number of community medical-legal clinics that you led or participated in
  - Number of individuals you served through the medical-legal partnerships
  - Number of healthcare providers you trained to screen, refer, and advocate for the unmet legal needs of their patients
  - Number of positive outcomes for individuals served in a medical-legal partnership

Reporting your accomplishments is important not only to promote your great work, but it also gives us the data we need to continue to receive funding to keep this program. Clients can be counted in this category if they achieved a positive outcome as a result of services you provided, or helped your supervisor provide. For example, the client's goals were partially or fully met due to legal representation or the client's situation improved due to legal assistance. "Documented" does not mean that you have an official letter from a court; verbal notification from the client is fine. Examples of documented positive outcomes include: increased income, foreclosure delayed or avoided, civil protection order granted. Partial victories count (e.g., requested 100% disability rating, received 50% disability rating).

You will also be asked to provide great stories from your work. A story brings hard data to life. When writing your stories, please describe the outcomes for the client and/or the community as much as possible. An outcome is a tangible, measurable (ideally with a number, a dollar value, or percentage) benefit to your client, community or your office. To convey outcomes effectively, it is often beneficial to write from the client's or community's perspective, not the lawyer's. These narratives are intended to put a legal victory in a non-legal context for a non-legal audience. For example, instead of "The case required drafting four separate complex motions which each required hours of legal research," try: "We were able to convince the judge to expunge Mr.

Smith's criminal record and as a result, he received a higher paying job that increased his yearly income by 25%. The additional income helped his home from being foreclosed – preventing his three children from transferring school districts half-way through the school year.”

Here are a few examples of stories from past Summer Corps Members to give you a sense of what to send to us:

- For three days in July, Equal Justice Works staff, along with some of our AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and Summer Corps members, had the opportunity to participate in the 24<sup>th</sup> annual [San Diego Stand Down](#), the largest event of its kind in the country. The three-day event provided holistic services to more than 1,000 veterans. One of the services offered to veterans is a homeless court, set-up on site, where veterans can have their cases resolved immediately. The services are a joint collaboration of the San Diego Public Defender Office, District Attorney, City Attorney and the San Diego court system. Volunteer attorneys from JAG (Judge Advocate General), legal services attorneys, and our AmeriCorps Fellows assisted the veterans from initial intake through their hearings, which were held under a tent on a handball court.
- In the process of working with a community organization trying to address homelessness, I helped a community group further its efforts to develop an affordable housing complex in its neighborhood, by identifying properties and researching land use laws. At the end of the summer, the community group had identified three properties and was applying for financing for one of them. The property had 100 units of housing, which were going to be offered at affordable rates to qualifying families.
- I wrote a newsletter article explaining the problems facing low income and homeless veterans and the local legal services available. The article resulted in 10 new phone calls for help to my organization and 3 pro bono attorneys offered to help after reading about the problems facing low-income and homeless veterans. Two of the attorneys took cases right away.

These are just a few examples of activities that we would love to hear about. Tell us about your accomplishments!

## How to Track Time

AmeriCorps regulations require certified time logs for each Summer Corps member. To ensure that your time log is accurate, please complete the time log in the Summer Corps Application Manager (SAM) on a weekly basis throughout the summer.

The time log will break your hours down between service hours and training hours. Your supervisor should provide you with an orientation when you begin service, so **the first hours recorded should be training hours**. You must have **at least four, but no more than 60, hours of training** by the end of the summer.

Service hours are the hours you spend doing work of the organization, for example, intakes, conducting research, preparing for a presentation, and giving a presentation. In other words, service hours encompass almost everything that you will do during your summer of service. **Do**

**not** record hours that you do not work because you are sick or on vacation. **Do not** record any hours spent doing prohibited or unallowable activities.

Reminder: You **must** serve a minimum of 300 hours (service plus training hours) to be eligible for the education award.

- Exception: If you have to end your service early for “compelling personal circumstances,” as described in Section X of the Summer Corps Contract, you may be eligible for a prorated education award. Please contact us if you believe this situation applies to you.

The time log can be completed by logging into your SAM account and scrolling down to the “Time Logger” button.

Within one week from your last day of service, you **must** certify your time log by clicking “View and Accept” in the “Time Log Certification & Exit Form” section of your SAM page. Once you have certified the time log, SAM will automatically send an email to your Supervisor asking him or her to certify it as well. Please remind them to do so immediately so that we can exit you from the program.

We encourage you to serve *more* than 300 hours and you may log those additional hours as service.

## Education Award

When your term is finished and you have completed everything, you will be eligible to get your education award. To do so, follow these instructions:

- Log in to the [My AmeriCorps Portal](#).
- Request disbursement of the Education Award to your school or lender. You can use the award to pay back student loans or to pay your tuition bill for the upcoming semester.
- Please note that payments are made directly to your school or loan company. You will not receive a check or a deposit to your bank account.
- Note that you have up to seven years after the end of your term of service in which to use the Education Award. You can use it all at once or in parts. The award is subject to taxation in the year it is used and AmeriCorps does not withhold taxes from the award.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about anything related to your Summer Corps experience or education award, please contact us at [summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:summercorps@equaljusticeworks.org). We strive to answer emails within two business days.

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