



Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

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AmeriCorps Positions Available 2019-2020 Term **AFNHA AmeriCorps: Enhancing Assets to Benefit Communities Program** **Elkins, West Virginia and surrounding counties**

The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area is seeking AmeriCorps members to provide direct service to benefit communities through conservation and community development activities.

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (AFNHA) AmeriCorps members provide full-time service for one year, living and serving in beautiful rural West Virginia. We are looking for committed individuals with a degree or experience related to conservation, public history, community development, or historic preservation. You will gain valuable experience and connections, while providing service in rural communities.

We have 40 positions for the 19-20 term. Interviews will start in May, with site interviews and position selection through August or until all positions are filled. Most positions will start September 5, 2019, and are full-time for 11 ½ months.

About AFNHA and our AmeriCorps Program

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area is an 18-county region in the highlands of West Virginia and western Maryland, working to conserve, enhance, and interpret our forest heritage assets – including natural, historic, cultural, forest products, and forest management – to encourage heritage tourism as diversified economic development for our rural communities. For more information see www.appalachianforest.us.



AFNHA AmeriCorps members help local organizations to enhance community, natural, and historic assets. Member assignments focus on conservation of natural resources, rural community development, cultural heritage development, and/or historic preservation of community buildings. About half of the AFNHA AmeriCorps members are based in Randolph County (Elkins), West Virginia, with the rest in other AFNHA West Virginia counties. We are seeking people with commitment and initiative, and with a relevant degree or experience.

AmeriCorps members serve full-time and receive a living allowance of \$14,000 for the year, plus an education award of \$6095 at the completion of your one year commitment. For more information on AmeriCorps see <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/what-amicorps>

Recruitment for this program encourages diversity and will not discriminate based upon race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. The program will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified persons with disabilities.

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Types of Positions and Position Expectations

Conservation Positions

Conservation members conserve natural resources on projects including ecosystem restoration, habitat monitoring, and environmental education. Most positions are assigned individually to a sponsor organization in Randolph, Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Tucker or Hardy counties. Members will work both individually and as team members on multiple projects in several counties. Winter work is primarily project planning and office-based work; fall, spring and summer work may include substantial outdoor field work for some positions. Some positions are focused on field work, other projects will focus more on environmental education and outreach to stakeholders and volunteers. Most conservation positions are with government agencies (Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife, WV Division of Forestry) or with the local office of major conservation non-profits.

Depending on the position, these members:

- Perform hands-on conservation work such as ecosystem restoration, tree planting, invasive species control, watershed, wetlands, or wildlife habitat improvements, recreation improvements, trails, etc.
- Assist with ecosystem surveys, wildlife or wilderness monitoring, data collection, mapping
- Conduct environmental education with school children and/or public, develop interpretive projects such as signs or brochures, or provide information and outreach about recreation opportunities and conservation issues
- Assist with conservation planning, partnership development, and outreach
- Recruit and work with volunteers

Additional skills and qualities sought for these position:

- Degree and/or experience in natural and environmental issues -- could include forestry, botany, wildlife biology, ecology, environmental studies, invasive species, watersheds, landscape, gardening, trails, outdoor recreation, etc.
- Willing and able to do physical labor. (for field work positions)
- Interest or experience with environmental education or communications/writing (for outreach positions.)
- Strong computer skills, word processing and email required. Expertise with specialized programs such as database and GIS is expected for some positions.

Community Positions

Members help rural communities with economic development based on their cultural heritage resources and tourism. Positions will be based in specific communities around the AFNHA area, and members will be assigned individually to specific community organizations. Types of sites include Main Street programs or similar community development organizations, tourism development or networking organizations, cultural arts organizations, archaeology programs, or heritage sites and museums. A few positions will serve with two organizations, and some projects may involve teamwork with other members. (A few half-time opportunities might be available in special circumstances.)

Community development projects may include:

- Assisting communities to carry out development projects of their choosing
- Identifying community assets, research or inventory, work with archives, collections management, historic research, or oral history
- Archaeology field work and assessments
- Develop interpretative exhibits, brochures, or written articles
- Provide visitor services, give tours, assist with events and public programming,
- Promotion, tourism, outreach for your site, such as social media, websites, press relations
- Working closely with local volunteers and committees, capacity building for local organizations

Degree and/or experience relevant to community work is preferred. Type of degree could include community development, planning, public administration, marketing, communications, tourism, or could be history, public history, historic preservation, museum studies, anthropology, arts, or a related field.

Additional skills and qualities helpful for community positions:

- Experience or interest in working with communities and community groups
- Training or experience with public history, museums, archives or collections management
- Training in or experience with communications, marketing, social media, journalism, or graphic arts
- Training in or experience with education, interpretation, interpretive planning, or exhibits
- Strong computer skills, word processing and email required. Expertise with specialized programs such as graphics, database, Past Perfect, WordPress, or CAD is a plus.
- Interest in helping build consensus and collaboration, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to find common goals
- Experience or interest in working with children or youth groups
- Familiarity with or contacts within the AFHA region or West Virginia

Community Positions – Historic Preservation Hands On Team

Hands-On Team Positions will be based in Randolph County with some travel. These members work mostly as a team on multiple projects, mostly historic preservation construction plus some hands-on conservation and other tasks. One member may be designated as team coordinator.

Position responsibilities:

The hands-on team will work together on several projects in multiple locations. Working with the site supervisors and volunteers, you will:

- Perform hands-on construction tasks to rehabilitate historic public buildings. Hard physical work, using power tools, and occasional difficult working conditions are to be expected. Tasks will range from unskilled cleanup and demolition to skilled preservation tasks that you will be trained to do. You will learn and be expected to follow safety procedures and wear appropriate safety equipment. This is the major proportion of team time.
- Perform outdoor conservation improvement projects such as trail work, plantings, and landscape projects. This is a smaller proportion of the team time. All members should expect to do both construction and conservation tasks.
- Help recruit volunteers for training workshops and project work, and support volunteer management for the project sites you work with.
- Participate in training on preservation issues and specific skills.
- Help identify, define scope, and plan specific work project(s) that preserve, rehabilitate or restore historic properties or accomplish conservation improvements. Team will complete several projects in different localities.
- Assist with preservation awareness and educational efforts related to your projects.

Additional skills and qualities expected for this position:

- Degree and/or experience with historic preservation, preservation trades, or restoration.

AND/OR

- Construction work or volunteer experience.
- Willing and able to do physical labor.
- Need a working knowledge of hand tools, i.e. hammers, screwdrivers, measuring tapes, etc. Training will be provided as needed on power tools and specialized equipment
- Persistence and attention to detail to complete repetitive tasks to a quality result.
- Self-direction to juggle multiple assignments and stay on task.
- Must be able to travel away from home for several days at a time.

Requirements for All Positions

Skills and qualities expected for all positions will include:

- Commitment to community service.
- AmeriCorps requires American citizenship or permanent resident (green card) with high school completion.
- Good communication skills. Comfortable with common computer programs.
- Organized, responsible, able to take initiative and be self-directed.
- Able to work in a team, to get along with a wide variety of people, work with community volunteers.
- Interested in learning, able to take direction
- Most positions require some driving, often with your own car. Due to rural location, very few positions are feasible without a vehicle.
- For our program, at least 21 years old, college degree or significant progress toward one, or varied life experience, is needed.

Position responsibilities for all positions:

- Members will be selected for specific positions in conservation, rural community heritage development, or hands-on team which specializes in historic preservation.
- Members selected should have a degree and/or experience relevant to the specific position.
- Members commit to completing hours and time for their position. For full time position this is 1725 hours of service expected over 11 ½ months.
- Members will have a specific scope of service for your position, including responsibility for assigned projects. You will help identify, define scope, plan and implement specific projects. You will support and assist your site with a variety of activities.
- Members will work with your site organization to recruit and manage volunteers to assist you with projects, and to improve volunteer management practices and build capacity for your organization.
- Many positions include promotion, education, outreach and awareness about your site or project.
- All members will participate in orientation, leadership training, and skills trainings.
- Members will participate in team meetings, AFNHA meetings, events and capacity building.
- All members will participate in some community service activities.
- Team members may assist each other to perform some project work, with occasional opportunities for activities related to other focus areas than your own.
- Members will be responsible for AmeriCorps reporting requirements, including but not limited to timesheets, project reports, volunteer logs, and assessing project impact.

Position Expectations and Benefits

Positions are full-time, with most beginning on Sept 5, 2019, and completing by August 21, 2020. Each member commits to completing at least 1700 hours of service (1725 recommended) within a 12 month period. (If a position starts late, it will be for one year from start date.) Members are expected to continue to serve until the end of the program year, unless early completion is arranged, such as to complete early for fall school semester. Schedules can be adjusted to some degree, depending on the needs of the projects and your team, balanced with your own needs. All positions will likely include some, pre-scheduled, evening and weekend activities. Limited outside school or other work responsibilities can be allowed as long as all AmeriCorps responsibilities are met first.

Position will pay a living allowance of \$14,000 gross for the year, payable in 24 bi-monthly installments.

Workers Comp will be provided, and we will help support health insurance as needed. A child care subsidy can be available for qualified candidates. Unemployment coverage is not included. Many members may qualify for SNAP benefits to help with food expenses.

You will receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of \$6095.00 at the successful completion of your 1700 hour term of service. Uncompleted terms do not receive educational award. The award can be used for most college tuition, technical or vocational education, or repayment of qualified student loans. Members 55 or older may choose to transfer their award to a child or grandchild. Existing qualified student loans can be deferred during your AmeriCorps service with loan interest paid for the deferred period.

You are responsible for your own living arrangements and cost, although many members arrange to room together with other members. No resettlement or moving allowance is included.

A few specific positions may be offered as half-time positions. These are 900 hour positions, either spread over the year, or within a designated period. Stipend for half-time positions is \$7,000 and education award is \$3047.50

Application Process

We interview and select applicants on a rolling basis. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled. We are actively recruiting now.

Please submit:

AmeriCorps portal application (required)

- Complete your profile on <https://my.americorps.gov>
- Click on “apply to serve” to create your profile. We suggest that for “local address” you use the state where you will be living during the summer of 2019 (if selected, you will need a background check for that state). Fill out your complete application.
- Try to select reference names who will be responsive to an on-line reference request. You don’t need to wait for reference replies before submitting – those responses will show up when completed.
- Then “search listings” for Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area or AFNHA Conservation, Community, or Hands-On Team. We have multiple listings – you can submit to any one of them. If you don’t find it by name, search AmeriCorps State/National; West Virginia. For can also search for Environment or Community Outreach in West Virginia. When you find one of our opportunity listings, submit your profile application to it.
- If you do not find the opportunity open or have technical difficulties, go ahead and email your cover letter and resume directly to us, and come back to this later when it is available.

Cover letter (required)

- Email directly to afha@appalachianforest.us a cover letter telling us a bit more about yourself, and why you are specifically interested in AFHA AmeriCorps. This is your introduction to us. What do you feel you will bring to this position?

Optional

- Resume – This is helpful if it tells us more about you than your AmeriCorps application, and/or if for some reason you are delayed in submitting the AmeriCorps application. We can start your recruitment process with cover letter and resume, then follow up with AmeriCorps application. Some position supervisors, especially for conservation positions, will expect a resume or CV.
- Short writing sample of your promotional, interpretive, or academic writing (especially helpful for members seeking positions involving a lot of communications or writing) or other relevant examples of your work.

Screening steps

- Once we receive your cover letter and AmeriCorps application and/or resume, we will confirm to you which positions are available, and have you fill out a pre-interview form. This will include your opportunity to request the specific sites you are interested in. Prompt response to communications from us reflects positively on your application.

- Candidates who seem likely based on your written materials will do a program interview with AFHA, then follow-up interviews with sites that are considering you. (Occasionally you may do a site interview first; that's OK but both are still required) Interviews are usually by phone unless you live locally.
- Email us or watch www.appalachianforest.us/ameri-corps.htm for latest status of openings.
- We are interviewing now, and will make offers on a rolling basis until all are filled. Early applications get the most choice of site options, but usually some are still available into August. After program start in September, we will continue recruitment if positions remain available.

If You Are Selected

We will make you a formal offer for a specific position (or choice of positions) by email. In order to keep our recruitment moving, we will ask you to respond to this within a few days – so during your interview process please think through whether you are willing to make this commitment. Ask all the questions you would like to be sure this is right for you. Quitting AmeriCorps early to take a better job or because it is not what you expected are NOT acceptable reasons to leave, and you would not get your education award.

READ AND CONSIDER:

AmeriCorps means that you will be providing a national service.

You are making a commitment to provide at least 1700 hours of service within the year. This is a full-time position generally requiring a 40 hour work week. You will be committing to providing service from Sept 5 (or your start date) for 11 ½ months.

Once you accept the offer, we will send you more information about your next steps. Briefly, this will include:

- Information about completing your background check, before your service starts.
- Information about ID documentation and other items you are required to bring.
- Information to help you find lodging. You will be responsible for your own housing. We will help provide housing information to the extent we know of it, but we do not guarantee any of the options. A few positions may have low-cost housing available – please discuss this with the supervisor during your site interview. Do not be discouraged if you don't see apartments listed on-line or Craig's list – for rural communities you will find opportunities more by word of mouth than through media. A single apartment in Elkins will probably cost \$400 to \$500/month plus utilities; if you share with others you can reduce that cost. We do not provide any financial relocation assistance. Many members may qualify for SNAP benefits to help with food expenses.
- Connection with other incoming members, so you can start networking with them.
- Additional information and tips to help you prepare for your service year.

To apply, or for more information:

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