



Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

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AmeriCorps Positions Available 2017-2018 Term AFHA AmeriCorps: Enhancing Assets to Benefit Communities Program Elkins, West Virginia and surrounding counties

The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) is seeking AmeriCorps members to provide direct service to benefit communities through conservation, community development, and heritage tourism activities. Positions will start in September 2017.

AFHA 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.

We expect to have about 40 positions for the 17-18 term. We should know in May what specific positions are available. Early inquiries are welcome at any time. Interviews will start in May, with site interviews and position selection through August or until all positions are filled.

About AFHA and our AmeriCorps Program

AFHA 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 on AFHA see www.appalachianforest.us.



AFHA 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 AFHA AmeriCorps members are based in Randolph County (Elkins), West Virginia, with the rest in other AFHA West Virginia counties. We are seeking people with commitment and initiative, and with a relevant degree or experience.

Most positions will start September 5, 2016. Positions are full-time for 11 ½ months. No positions or offers will be final until our AmeriCorps grant is confirmed, hopefully in May.

AmeriCorps members serve full-time and receive a living allowance, plus an educational award at the completion of your one year commitment. For more information on AmeriCorps, including additional benefits see http://www.americorps.org/for_individuals/overview/index.asp

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.

For all positions -- Skills and qualities expected for all positions will include:

- Commitment to community service.
- Good communication skills. Comfortable with common computer programs.
- Organized, responsible, able to take initiative and be self-directed.
- Ability to work with groups and community volunteers.
- Able to work in a team, able to get along with a wide variety of people.
- Interested in learning, able to take direction
- For our program, at least 21 years old, college degree or significant progress toward one, or varied life experience, is needed. High school completion is required.

Position responsibilities for all positions:

- Members will be selected for positions in conservation, heritage development, rural community 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 will have a specific scope of service for their position, including responsibility for assigned projects. You will help identify, define scope, plan and implement specific projects.
- Members will support and assist their site with a variety of activities.
- Members will work with their site organization to recruit and manage volunteers to assist you with projects, and to improve volunteer management practices 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, AFHA meetings, events and capacity building.
- Team members may assist each other to perform some project work, with occasional opportunities for activities related to other focus areas than your own.
- All members will participate in some community service activities.
- Members will be responsible for AmeriCorps reporting requirements, including but not limited to timesheets, project reports, volunteer logs, and assessing project impact.

Descriptions of specific positions:

We will know the specific positions available in May. Serious applicants will receive information then about positions and projects, along with more detailed position descriptions, and will be given the opportunity to select which positions you wish to interview for. While initial program interviews may discuss multiple opportunities in the program, offers when made will be for specific positions. We try for position assignments that are good fit between your interests and the site's needs.

For Conservation positions:

Conservation members conserve natural resources on projects to including ecosystem restoration, habitat monitoring, and environmental education. Most positions are assigned individually to a sponsor organization in Randolph, Pocahontas, Tucker, Pendleton, 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. 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) or with the local office of major conservation non-profits.

Depending on the position, assignments may include one or more of:

- 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

Additional skills and qualities expected for this 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 a plus for some positions.

For Heritage Development positions

Members help historical and cultural organizations develop and conserve local cultural heritage and encourage heritage tourism. Positions will be based in communities around the AFHA area, and members will be assigned individually to specific community organizations and will work actively with the site's volunteers. Types of sites include museums, historic sites, or heritage tourism, cultural or arts programs. A few positions will serve with two organizations, and some projects involve teamwork with other members.

Depending on the position, assignments may include one or more of:

- Interpretation, giving tours, developing exhibits or brochures
- Archive or collections management,
- Oral history collection or programming
- Research, writing about community heritage,
- Culture, arts, or heritage tourism networking,
- Assisting with events or tourism activities, providing visitor services,
- Promotion and outreach for your site, such as social media, websites, press relations

Degree and/or experience in history, public history, historic preservation, museum studies, anthropology, arts, archives or related field, or with communications or tourism, is preferred.

For Community Development positions

Members help rural communities with economic development based on their heritage resources and tourism. Positions will be based in specific communities around the AFHA area, and members will be assigned individually to specific community organizations. Types of sites include Main Street programs or similar community development organizations, development and planning organizations, and tourism development sites. A few positions will serve with two organizations, and some projects may involve teamwork with other members.

Community development projects may include:

- Working closely with local volunteers and committees
- Identifying community assets, research or inventory
- Assisting community to carry out development projects of their choosing
- Promotion, tourism development
- Special events

Degree and/or experience relevant to community work is preferred. Type of degree could include community development, planning, public administration, marketing, communications, or any related field.

Additional skills and qualities expected for both heritage and community development positions:

- Experience or interest in working with communities and community groups
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong computer skills, word processing and email required. Expertise with specialized programs such as graphics, database, Past Perfect, WordPress, or CAD is a plus.

Experience with some of the following are encouraged for specific positions:

- Training in or experience with communications, marketing, social media, journalism, or graphic arts
- Training in or experience with education, interpretation, interpretive planning, or exhibits
- Experience with archives, collections management, historic research, or oral history
- Experience with heritage tourism or related retail or small business
- 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.

For Hands-On Team positions:

Positions will be based in Randolph County with some travel. These members mostly work as a team on multiple projects, mostly historic preservation construction with some hands-on conservation and other tasks.

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.

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.

For all applicants -- position expectations and benefits:

Positions will begin on Sept 5, 2017, with most completing by August 17, 2018. Each member commits to completing at least 1700 hours of service 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 \$12,630 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 at least \$5,815.00 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.

Optional enrollment in a 2 year program for a Masters Degree in Community Change may be possible. This pilot program will count your AmeriCorps experience toward part of the requirements for the degree. Inquire if interested.

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.

Application Process:

We interview and select applicants on a rolling basis. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled. Early application may be sent at any time.

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 2017 (if selected, you will need a background check for that state). Try to select reference names who will be responsive to an on-line reference request.

Then search for Appalachian Forest Heritage Area. Search AmeriCorps State/National; West Virginia; Appalachian Forest Heritage Area. For can also search for Environment or Community Outreach in West Virginia. When you find our opportunity listing, submit your profile application to it. If you do not find the opportunity open, 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.
- 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 send you more information on our program, and get some more information from you. We will send you more information on positions and their status, as well as the recruitment and interview steps. 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. Interviews are usually by phone unless you live locally.

Email us or watch www.appalachianforest.us/mericorps.htm for latest status of openings. We hope to have list of available sites posted sometime in May.

We will begin interviews in May, and 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.

To apply, or for more information:

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