



**STEWARDS**  
**INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENTS**  
A program of Conservation Legacy



**AmeriCorps**

# **SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK**

[www.stewardslegacy.org](http://www.stewardslegacy.org)

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Disclaimer: Below is a thorough introduction to our program, however this handbook is not a complete description of our organization’s policies and procedures. If you have a question that is not covered within the Stewards Supervisor Handbook, please speak with your regular Program Staff.

# CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

## MISSION

***Providing individual opportunities through service that build career-based experience, strengthen communities, and preserve our natural resources.***

Stewards Individual Placements (STEWARDS) prides itself in managing projects, identifying partners, and supporting opportunities for members that align with our mission.



## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Stewards Individual Placements recognizes and values the array of characteristics and experiences contributed by individuals and promotes and celebrates the diversity of our Members, partnering organizations, and staff.

STEWARDS's continued success is contingent on our ability to recruit, select, promote, and retain staff and participants of differing thoughts, backgrounds, ethnicities, gender identities, marital statuses, socio-economic statuses, languages, and geographic locations.

We are dedicated to creating an organization that reflects the nation's diversity, hires the best people to do the best service possible, and recognizes that achieving an inclusive and diverse team is integral to our success as a national program. It is critical to our integrity as an organization that all staff and participants working or serving in partnership with STEWARDS are welcome and treated with dignity and respect throughout their service or employment.

## VALUES

- i. We promote excellence in national service and strive to create the optimal service terms for our participants and organizational partners.
- ii. We strive for consistency, transparency, and efficiency in our organizational systems and processes.
- iii. We are committed to a collegiate environment that promotes personal development, individuality, professionalism, and fun.
- iv. We respect the legacy of our organization while embracing the need to adapt our systems to better serve participants and partners.
- v. We are committed to actively participating in efforts to preserve and restore the global environment and ecosystem for future generations.

## ABOUT STEWARDS INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENTS

STEWARDS works with land and water management agencies and non-profit organizations to identify and facilitate individual placements for people interested in gaining experience in community development, and natural and cultural resource management. As a Stewards Member, you have a unique opportunity to develop your own professional and personal skill set

during your service term while helping your sponsoring organization with projects focused on environmental resource management or nonprofit programming.

STEWARDS places over 600 members in individual service terms ranging from eight (8) to fifty-two (52) weeks throughout the country each year. STEWARDS works with multiple partners to create highly impactful national service projects and career development opportunities that fulfill the STEWARDS mission and grow the next generation of service leaders.



Since its founding as the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team in 2002, STEWARDS's mission has evolved to support national service projects that bring people together to strengthen communities and preserve our natural resources. Many team alumni have become leaders in the nonprofit, government, or private sectors, often in the communities they served during their service term.

STEWARDS includes several signature initiatives and partnerships. STEWARDS AmeriCorps initiatives include: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) WaterCorps, Community Volunteer Ambassadors (CVA), NPS Scientists-in-the-Parks (SIP), Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC), NPS Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) AmeriCorps, and other individual AmeriCorps placements. Additionally, we proudly manage an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) program that places service members with nonprofits, state or federal agencies with the goal to alleviate poverty through capacity building, volunteer engagement, and leadership development. All VISTA projects are addressing poverty alleviation through the lens of conservation service. VISTA project partners include the National Park Foundation, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, United States Forest Service, the Department of Reclamation and Mining Safety of Colorado, Western Colorado University, and Conservation Legacy among others. STEWARDS also supports dozens of VISTAs serving with local non-projects and civic entities across all states and territories.

STEWARDS is a program of [Conservation Legacy](#), which is a national organization dedicated to supporting locally based conservation programs. Conservation Legacy operates and supports programs that provide service and work opportunities for a diverse group of individuals to complete important conservation and community projects for the public benefit. Conservation Legacy programs include: [Southwest Conservation Corps](#), [Appalachian Conservation Corps](#), [Southeast Conservation Corps](#), [Arizona Conservation Corps](#), [Conservation Corps New Mexico](#), [Conservation Corps North Carolina](#), [Preserve America Youth Summit](#), [Ancestral Lands](#)

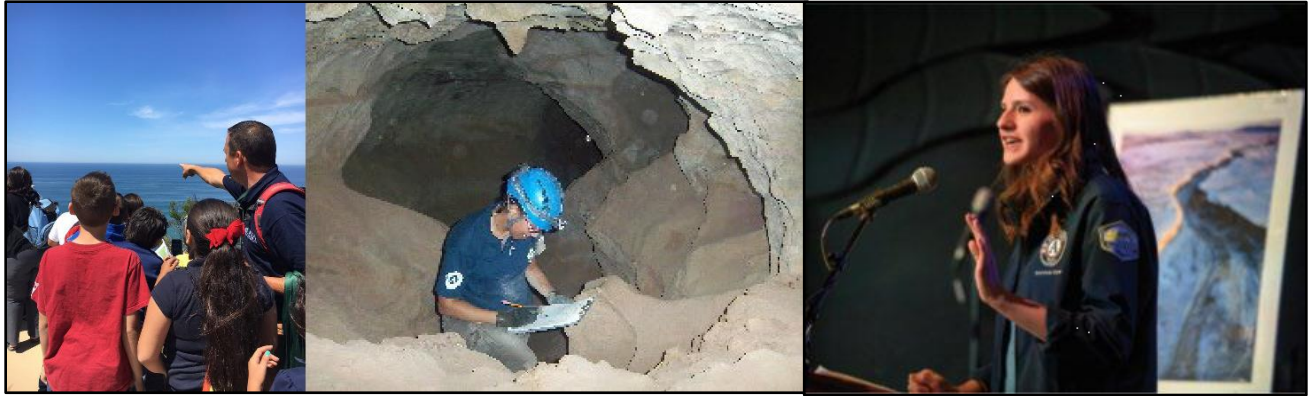
[Conservation Corps](#) and [Stewards Individual Placements](#). Within the distinctive programs of Conservation Legacy there are many groundbreaking and unique models for engaging members of all ages, including Ancestral Lands model, the Corps River Restoration, Veterans Fire Corps, and Disaster Response teams.

The first program of Conservation Legacy was founded in 1998 and was modelled after of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's and 40's, ensuring a strong foundation of service and community.

## Conservation Legacy Organizational Structure



For more information, visit [www.conservationlegacy.org](http://www.conservationlegacy.org) and [www.stewardslegacy.org](http://www.stewardslegacy.org).



### Types of Individual Placements:

STEWARDS runs three distinct types of Individual Placements: AmeriCorps State/National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and our intern positions. These different position types allow STEWARDS to provide a variety of member focus areas and experiences in collaboration with our partners.

Position Type	AmeriCorps State & National	AmeriCorps VISTA	Intern
Sponsoring Organization (Site)	Land management agency or organization	Community Based Nonprofit	Land management agency or organization
Direct or Indirect Service	Direct	Indirect	Direct or Indirect
Term Length	8-52 weeks	365 days	8-52 weeks
Earns Hiring Authority with successful completion of term	Public Land Corps (PLC) when applicable	Non-competitive eligibility (NCE) for up to three years	Public Land Corps (PLC) when applicable
Education Requirements	Vary by position	Bachelor's Degree Preferred	Vary by position
Project Focus	Natural and Cultural Resource Management	Capacity building and poverty alleviation through Community Engagement and nonprofit leadership	Natural and Cultural Resource Management or Community Engagement
Receives On-site Supervision	✓	✓	✓
Eligible for Segal Education Award and other AmeriCorps Benefits	✓	✓	Not eligible for AmeriCorps Benefits
Access to Stewards staff	✓	✓	✓
Inclusion in the broader Conservation Legacy network	✓	✓	✓

## **STEWARDS Project Focus Areas:**

### **Direct Service**

- Gathering and testing of water quality samples
- GPS use, GIS mapping, Cartography and Remote Sensing
- Interpretive services
- Invasive species management
- Trail maintenance and building

### **Indirect Service**

- Partnership Building
- Asset Mapping
- Volunteer and community engagement
- Grant writing
- Program and Curriculum development



## CHAPTER 2: ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

STEWARDS consists of a network of organizations, agencies, and individuals with varying roles and responsibilities. To help you understand the relationships between members, site supervisors (mentors) with partner agencies, and Stewards staff please review the key roles below.

### STEWARDS MEMBERS

Stewards Members come from all over the country and bring a wide variety of experience to their positions. Typically, our members are motivated to join the program because they are interested in volunteer/national service work, starting a career in their field of work, and/or are passionate about conservation.

Members commit to a set length of time and number of hours for their term of service. Although members are considered as volunteers, unless they are a non-AmeriCorps Member, it is okay for the host site to have expectations of them like those that you have for employees but acknowledge that STEWARDS is the employer of record and will manage all HR issues for the members, taking the administrative burden away from the host site/agency. There are a wide range of responsibilities members need to take seriously and complete in a timely manner to have a quality experience. Members are expected to not only successfully perform the duties outlined by Stewards Individual Placements and their host sites, but to also participate in professional development directed by you, the mentor and the member's own interests and motivation.



### Stewards Member Responsibilities

**Onboarding and enrollment:** Members must complete enrollment paperwork as instructed by Stewards staff – this includes completing a three-part background check prior to the start of service, as well as any additional background checks required for site specific duties. Members also need to submit copies of a driver's license (unless in the state of Maine) and documents of proof of citizenship. Members must bring them on the first day of their term of service to complete an I9 and AmeriCorps Eligibility form (if they are an AmeriCorps member). **Make sure to contact your member before they start to make sure they know where to go, when to be there, and what to bring for the first few days as they settle into their new position.** Be prepared to answer questions about what to wear (including uniform expectations) and things the site may be doing for the first few days. Remember, you can always call your assigned Stewards support Staff with questions or concerns about what you need to do before your member starts their term of service.

**During service:** By accepting this position, the member has agreed that they are able to satisfactorily complete the duties with or without accommodations that were outlined in the position announcement that they applied to. With that said, members are expected to focus on assignments outlined by the host agency and site supervisor.

- **Orientation:** During the first week, a Stewards Staff Member or Leader will provide a required new member orientation to the member. The orientation is extremely important as it covers numerous topics relevant to your member's

internship ranging from payroll to reporting. Please make time and space for your member to complete this with Stewards Staff.

- **Onsite Commitment:** Stewards Members are expected to serve from an office in the service community. Under certain conditions such as a government shutdown or a pandemic, the member may be allowed to telework. All teleservices must be approved by you as the members site supervisor as well as Stewards Program Staff.
- **Time Commitment:** Stewards Members are expected to serve full-time for their host site. Members may need to serve on weekends, at night, or overtime depending on the activities of their host organization, but their hours should even out to about 40 per week. **AmeriCorps State/National positions are not permitted to be part-time.**
- **Timesheet and Reporting:** Stewards Members are required to submit a timesheet to you for approval on a bi-weekly basis through their Salesforce portal. (Salesforce is our database system that tracks member hours and accomplishments). AmeriCorps members working towards an education award have an added responsibility to track their total approved hours to ensure they are on track to complete needed hours by the end of the term of service. **Do not hesitate to contact Program Staff if you are even slightly concerned about a member completing hours for an education award by the end of service.**
- We will ask members to complete reports throughout their term that are intended to provide updates on what the site is working on, describe the working relationship with the member, measure the impact that the member is having, and give an opportunity to provide feedback about our program. Your member must complete quarterly or midterm reports depending on the length of the term of service. Supervisors will also play a part in the reporting duties. **All members are expected to complete a final report summarizing their experience for the entire term of service.** We read every report and use the information you and your member provide to offer input to partner agencies, improve our own program, and provide important details for your reporting purposes about the accomplishments of the project during your members term of service.
- Supervisors must also complete program and member evaluations.
  - **Program evaluations:** program evaluations are sent via a Salesforce link. Your Program Staff will reach out 30 days in advance of the member's close of service.
  - **Member evaluations:** Member evaluations are included in an email along with the program evaluation in the form of a word document. Please fill out the corresponding word document and return in a timely manner. Failure to submit the member evaluation can result in the member's end of service benefit being delayed or withheld completely.
- **Communication Commitment:** As a supervisor to a Stewards member, you have agreed to open communication via email and phone calls from Stewards Program Staff regarding your member and their project work. While our goal is to coordinate regular quarterly check ins with you, please contact Program Staff with questions or concerns about anything relevant to your member's service. Remember, sooner is better when it comes to resolving potential problems.

**As the Term of Service Ends:** Supervisors should be checking submitted hours throughout the term of service to ensure the member is on track to complete the hours agreed to complete for the AmeriCorps Education award (for AmeriCorps members). As the member nears the end of term of service it is imperative that you pay close attention to their hours, don't stop checking just because they are almost done; keep checking their hours to make sure they earn the Education Award they have been working towards. You are responsible for approving all hours. Failure to approve a member's hours on Salesforce could result in a delay or forfeiture of their Education Award. **If you and your member are unsure about the minimum required hours to meet, please contact Program Staff.**

Members must complete a final report which is due on the last day of the term of service. Your assigned Program Staff or VISTA Leader will send your member instructions and links to report templates approximately two weeks prior to the last day of the term of service. The final reports are an integral component to the service term. Do not hesitate to contact Stewards staff with questions about the final report. In the same email, your assigned Program Staff or VISTA Leader will include useful information about using the Education Award, looking for jobs, creating a powerful resume, staying engaged as an alumnus of the program, and updates on approved hours.

## SITE SUPERVISORS (MENTORS)

Your responsibility as a site supervisor is to provide direct training, mentorship, and daily supervision to the member(s). Below is a general list of your responsibilities through-out your member's service term.

### Supervisor Responsibilities

- **Preparation for your member's arrival:** Ensure all trainings, orientations, workspaces (computer access and phone line), etc., are in place prior to your member's start date. Contact your member(s) to provide helpful information, offer advice on what to expect the first few days, and serve as the onsite contact. *If you have not already spoken with your member, please let your assigned Program Staff know and they will work with you to set up a call or meeting.*
- **Orientation:** Before your member's first day, Program Staff will provide you with an orientation to the program and introduce you to Conservation Legacy and its programs. During this orientation, you will be informed of your responsibility to the administrative side of this opportunity.
- **Training:** You will provide a detailed orientation and training for your member when they arrive onsite. Training might include introducing your member to your host community and agency's culture, introducing them to local stakeholders that will make your member's service successful, and reviewing all standard safety and workplace trainings provided to new employees as well as technical trainings that will help your member meet your site's expectations. *Please contact your assigned Program Staff and let them know if you feel that you cannot provide appropriate training that would help you with your project.*
- **Daily Oversight:** You are responsible for day-to-day oversight and management of your Steward's Member experience. You will ensure that your member understands the host agency expectations and that the member clearly understands your project. This includes working with your member to provide meaningful work assignments each day, ensuring that the member is performing their assignments safely, and that they are receiving proper staff oversight and

support from yourself and other project partners. *Please inform your member ahead of their first day regarding dress code, lunch and break policies (including smoking), days off, and weather/emergency contingencies.*

- **Mentorship:** By participating in this program, you have volunteered to not only supervise, but also act as a mentor to your Member. Mentorship is an extraordinary opportunity to help your member develop personal and professional skills that they may not receive in a different capacity. Depending on your member's prior experience, you should anticipate teaching the basic work skills, agency culture, how to give and receive feedback, write reports, and how to manage their time effectively to meet deadlines. We encourage you to take extra time to talk with your member(s) about their professional goals and provide any additional education and training opportunities. Remember, this program is for job skills growth, and is geared towards providing a new experience to these individuals. By selecting someone who already has extensive experience in your field, they may not have as much room to grow as someone who does not have a higher-level experience but is willing to learn. We hope you'll agree that this program is an exciting opportunity to share your valuable knowledge and skills with your member, and to further develop their professional and personal skill set.
- **Safety:** It is your responsibility to ensure that your member receives and has access to any necessary protective equipment, receives regular safety briefings, and that they participate in all appropriate safety training, including training on the use of any specialty tools. The site supervisor and host agency should have a detailed Risk Management Plan in place that they share with their member(s) before they begin work on any projects. The programs of Conservation Legacy hope that you and your agency operate in a work environment that allows members to express their concerns that they may not deem safe. Participants should not be criticized for sharing this concern and pausing work as safety should be everyone's top priority. *Please contact your assigned Program Staff should you have any questions about what is allowable/unallowable, and please speak with your member(s) if they have any concerns about their personal safety.*
- **Timesheets:** You will be provided with a timesheet schedule at the beginning of the member's term; it is your responsibility to review and approve your member's timesheet on a bi-weekly basis. Failure to approve their timesheet on time could result in withheld pay. You will set their weekly schedule and it is expected that they strive to achieve a full-time work schedule. All hourly Interns must have an overtime policy in place before overtime can occur. *Please contact your assigned Program Staff if your member is falling behind on achieving their AmeriCorps Education Award hours. (see section 3 of this Handbook)*
- **PTO:** The member's position has been set up to allow them to take time off when needed. Time off is defined as any Federal Holiday, sick, or vacation time. All member time off must be approved in advance by you. Time off does not count towards a member's required AmeriCorps hours so you and the member must keep close track to ensure the member can meet their required hours. *Please see the section on Personal Time Off in Section 3 of this Handbook)*
- **Reporting:** The member is required to complete several Stewards reports during their term. When they submit their reports, you will receive a copy.
- **Performance Evaluations:** Stewards staff will ask you to complete a mid-term and a final member evaluation. Evaluations are intended to track the member's progress and address any successes or improvements they have made.

## PROGRAM STAFF SUPPORT

We are here to support you and your individual placement(s) during their service and throughout your project. Your assigned Program Staff is available to help problem solve any challenges that may arise during your members term of service. *We would rather hear from you early and often when an issue can still be resolved than to hear from you when it is too late.* Please do not hesitate to contact our staff with questions or concerns at any point. We are here to help; and enjoy working closely with partners, supervisors, and members to ensure an experience that is powerful, impactful, and enjoyable!

### Program Staff Responsibilities

- **Helping you and the member get started:** When a member has been selected as an Individual Placement, you both will be assigned a Program Staff member who will be the main contact throughout their position. This staff member will contact the member to introduce themselves and review the onboarding tasks they'll need to complete prior to their first day of service. You will also receive a welcome prior to the selected member's start date and be provided with a library of helpful resources to use throughout the member's term.
- **Helping you and the member during their service term:** The assigned Program Staff member will be in contact with you and the member during their first week at your site to make sure you have access to the program resource library and have set up time to view the orientations. The member program orientation covers topics to help make the best of their term of service and will answer logistical and administrative questions that the member may have about payroll, timekeeping, Workers' Compensation claims, submitting accomplishment reports, Member Assistance Programs, and more. The staff member will provide templates for reports including report due dates and timesheet approval schedules. Additionally, this staff member will stay in contact with the member throughout their term of service to address anything that might come up. Topics of contact should include but are not limited to changes in length of position, teleworking, government shutdowns, emergency situations, and any system questions. We recommend that if the member or you have questions or concerns to contact your assigned Program Staff.
- **Helping you and your member as their term of service ends:** As you near the end of the position, your Program Staff contact will be available to help navigate concerns like completing required service hours, exit paperwork and reporting, and final evaluations.
- **Member Safety:** The safety and wellbeing of every member and site is extremely important to us. If something unfortunate happens during the member's term of service, we will work with you and your member to document and initiate the Worker's Comp process. Once the member is safe and, in a place, where their injury can be taken care of by qualified individuals, please have them contact us immediately so that we can work together to initiate a claim for eligible situations.

### VISTA and CVA Leader Responsibilities

Each AmeriCorps VISTA and CVA Member is assigned a Leader who typically leads a group of Stewards Members based on agency needs and/or location. Leaders are individuals who have served at least one year in the field, either with our program or through another entity. Leaders connect Stewards staff and resources to the members in the field. They

conduct regular member calls, site visits, assist in developing trainings, and share resources between other members and Stewards staff. Leaders serve as ambassadors, facilitators/educators, liaisons, mentors, resource generators, and recruiters to support you through your term of service.

## CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In this section, we provide detailed information and instructions for you and the member to fulfill key requirements of the program. Much of the following is **critical** to continued success. Inaccurate reports and/or late paperwork could result in consequences such as the member not receiving your AmeriCorps Education Award (if applicable), suspension of position or even termination.

### MEMBER'S PAYROLL, TIMESHEET & HOURS RESPONSIBILITIES

Stewards staff is responsible for disbursement of the living allowance to the member. Members are expected to submit a timesheet weekly via our online system, Salesforce, which then must be approved by you. Failure to submit and approve hours could result in withheld paychecks.



If you are on leave for more than 2 weeks, you will need to designate another agency staff member to verify and approve your member's timesheet. It is your responsibility to notify Stewards staff of your absence, as well as who will be approving your member's timesheet while you are away.

You will receive a link to a resource library from Program Staff prior to your member's start date, which will include instructions on how to approve your member's timesheet. Please contact Program Staff if you have questions regarding this system. We greatly appreciate your support in making sure you meet payroll deadlines.

#### Member Hours & Stipend

Typically, you should be providing a full-time work schedule each week on average, even if those hours are spread out from 4-6 workdays.

#### AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps members will receive a weekly stipend, not an hourly wage. Your member will receive their full stipend if they miss time at work, unless we receive notification that your member is in breach of the member service agreement and need to be suspended or possibly terminated. Similarly, if your member works more than 40 hours in one week, they will not be awarded overtime pay. If your member misses work time, it is up to you to determine if they need to make up those hours or if that time will be counted as Personal Time Off (PTO). *Keep in mind - missing work time may impact your member's ability to complete the required hours to receive their AmeriCorps Education Award. You and your member should keep close track of these hours to ensure they will be able to reach their required hours.*

The minimum required hours to receive the AmeriCorps Education Award during the member's position can and are expected to be exceeded, especially if the position requires extra work in addition to those minimum hours. If the member completes their minimum hours before their end date, they still signed an agreement with your site agency agreeing to remain working at the site until their end date. For example, if the member completed their required 450 hours before their end date, this does not mean they can leave early.

## **AMERICORPS VISTA**

VISTA service members will receive a weekly stipend, not an hourly wage. The VISTA will receive their full stipend if they miss time at work, unless we receive notification from you that the member is in breach of the member service agreement and need to be suspended or possibly terminated. Similarly, if the VISTA serves more than 40 hours in one week, they will not be awarded overtime pay. If they miss work time, it is up to you, as the supervisor, to determine if they are required to make up those hours or if that time will be counted as a vacation or sick day.

VISTA service members must complete a full 365 days of service to receive the AmeriCorps Education Award or cash stipend.

## **STEWARDS INTERNS (paid hourly)**

Stewards Interns receive an hourly wage and are eligible for overtime pay and should be factored into the project budget. All overtime hours must be approved in advance by you, the supervisor. Overtime is calculated on a weekly basis; if your member records over 40 hours in one week on their timesheet, any hours worked over 40 will be paid time and a half and will effectively shorten their term length if overused. Non-productive hours (holiday or other paid time off) do not count toward overtime compensation. When your member starts their position, you will be required to sign a document titled "Stewards Overtime Policy" stating that you understand that your site is responsible for allocating any additional funds to cover overtime pay.

## **Personal Time Off, Holidays and other Leave of Absence**

Personal Time Off is defined as any Federal Holiday, Sick, or Vacation Time. All Personal Time Off must be approved by the site supervisor/mentor prior to time off. The site supervisor/mentor is responsible for monitoring and tracking all requested and upcoming Personal Time Off, to ensure the member can meet their minimum hours.

## **AMERICORPS**

Each AmeriCorps member has a minimum number of hours that they must reach by their end date. Stewards Program Staff will assign each member into an AmeriCorps slot, which are named for the minimum hours required 300, 450, 675, 900, 1200, and 1700 slots. Stewards staff will choose which slot level to assign a member based on the number of weeks the term is set to last, though occasionally there are other factors considered\*.

Federal Holidays (in addition to sick and vacation) count against Personal Time Off days. These hours are a true minimum, and members are expected to exceed these minimums. Personal Time Off may not be counted toward these minimum hours –if a Personal Time Off day is taken, the member must enter '0' into their timesheet and put a comment on what type of Personal Time Off they took (sick, holiday, vacation).



The following Personal Time Off Table assumes a 40-hour work week:

Slot Level (minimum hours)	Typical # Weeks	Personal Time off- # days
300	8-11	2 days
450	12-17	3 days
675	18-25	5 days
900	26-33	7 days
1200	34-45	13 days
1700	46-52	16 days

Personal Time Off cannot be saved up and used to take a member’s last week (or more) off –members must log hours through their final day to receive an education award.

Some programs, such as Scientists in Parks have a specific PTO policy, which will be provided to you in the program resource library at the start of the member’s term.

**AMERICORPS VISTA**

Members have 10 vacation days and 10 medical/sick days (in addition to Federal Holidays) that contribute to their PTO during their 365 days of service. A full description of these days is available on [www.vistacampus.gov](http://www.vistacampus.gov).

If members re-enroll or reinstate with STEWARDS for a second AmeriCorps VISTA term without a break in service, they may access their unused personal and medical leave earned in the previous term of service.

**STEWARDS INTERNS (paid hourly)**

PTO may be used at any time but must be pre-approved by supervisors. Any PTO or holiday used must be noted in the member timesheet in the description field and approved by you. PTO allowed for an intern’s position is based on the following chart:

Weeks in Term	Days of PTO
<10	2
11-20	4
21-30	6
31-40	8
41-52	10

***\*\*Please note, interns using PTO on Federal Holidays do not count against the allotted days of PTO. If your intern uses all their PTO before the end of their term and need a sick day, it will be an unpaid day.***

**MEMBER ENROLLMENT PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS & TIPS**

Before starting their position, your member will be required to complete certain documents, forms, and/or tasks to fulfill the enrollment paperwork requirements for AmeriCorps, Conservation Legacy, STEWARDS, and your site. These tasks must be completed before your position start date. If not completed by your start date, your member may be unable to start their service term.

If your site requires an internal background check, please work with your member as soon as they are selected to start that process to eliminate any delays in the member’s start date.

### **AmeriCorps Enrollment Criminal History Check Requirement**

AmeriCorps Members are required to complete a 3- part criminal history check. These checks are conducted by Stewards through 2 separate third-party vendors. All three parts of this check must be adjudicated prior to a member's ability to start on site or be added to payroll. Consent to, initiation of, and completion of these checks is the members responsibility and detailed instructions to complete these steps are provided to your member. A member's ability to start their service is contingent upon adjudication of these results.

### **Physical Verification of IDs**

Members are required to bring the signed original physical copies of their IDs with them on their first day of service at your site. Please ask the member for their IDs and review them to confirm that they have been presented. Your Program Staff will provide details about which IDs the member should provide and whether copies of these IDs should be sent into the program.

Physical verification of IDs is required by AmeriCorps as well as for federal employment verification as part of their I-9 process.

*It is important that you stay connected with your member after selection and before their start date to ensure that they are completing their tasks. If a member is not making adequate progress to complete these tasks, Stewards staff may reach out to you to communicate the urgency with your member. If you have any questions about these tasks, please ask your Program Staff.*

## **FIELD MEDIA**

Field media is a way for your member to share their voice and story and includes all means of media originating from the field and/or office. It can reach and influence people widely through member stories, photos, videos, project reports, press articles and community impact stories, and presentations. Some field media like project work photos, field notes and reflections, and reports are structured. Other field media is organic and dependent on the project, experience, and person.

A member sharing their story results in continued awareness of and support for National Service programs, which in turn supports more people participating in Conservation Legacy programs, and thus healthier individuals, communities, and ecosystems. Member stories can impact others.

## Field Notes

Members can share their story through field notes and other reflection. We have encouraged members to talk with you if they feel they have a compelling story to share – their story can impact others through social media, partnerships, grant reporting, local press, etc.

## Talking to the Press

Members are encouraged to report any unplanned media attention to their supervisor. If a crisis arises and the media is involved, members have been advised to direct media to their Program Staff or Supervisor and to not go on camera or on the record, especially as events are still unfolding.

We've developed a [video](#) to help you or your members learn to take great photos. **With your Member's permission, please take photos of your members in the field so we can show off the amazing work they are doing!**



## PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTING AND EVALUATIONS

You will be responsible for submitting several evaluations throughout the time you have a Stewards Member in your office. Additionally, your member will be responsible for submitting several reports during their term that will be used to track their accomplishments. During the first few weeks of your member's term, please set aside time for your member to spend time reviewing the report template that will be provided by your Program Staff.

### Evaluations

Depending on the length of your member's term, you will be required to complete one mid-term evaluation and one final evaluation for your member. Mid-term evaluations are required for positions 18 weeks or longer and final member evaluations are required for all positions. The evaluations are an excellent tool for monitoring the progress of your member and an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on performance.

You will also be required to complete a Program Final Evaluation for each project and member. This is collected to provide feedback to the program you are working with for us to implement valuable processes and protocols to make your experience as beneficial as possible.

Reminders for member evaluations and the program evaluation due dates will be sent prior to the date they are due. The mid-term will be due halfway through your member's term and the final member evaluation and program evaluation will be due on or before your member's exit date.

### Reports

Reports are our primary means of measuring your impact and the impact of Stewards Members and sharing that impact with our partners. Without reports, our program wouldn't be able to continue. All reports are considered a matter of public record and they are often shared directly with our funders and other stakeholders. Additionally,

stories, quotes, facts, and figures from the reports your member completes will be utilized in our annual report and newsletter. Generally, reports are submitted either as quarterly, midterm, or final reports. The reporting responsibilities and due dates for your member will be communicated from Program Staff. Please allow your member ample time to complete the required reports.

**The purpose of the report is to:**

- Document progress toward achieving project goals and objectives
- Provide a self-assessment tool for team members to promote continuous improvement
- Identify technical assistance needs for team members
- Collect information for distribution to the public

*(If your member is working on a confidential project, you, as the site supervisor, must provide approval to Program Staff indicating which parts of the report should be redacted from the public record.)*

**Supervisor project reporting requirements:**

- Assist member in developing a system for accurate data collection.
- Ensure member is taking photos of their experience, including action shots wearing their logoed gear.
- Ensure member is submitting project accomplishments in their timesheets on a monthly basis & submitting requested mid-term and final reports as applicable.
- Member must receive approval prior to submitting report from you (supervisor) if their project work may contain sensitive information that should not be public.
- Coach and mentor member if reports need revision and to ensure reports are submitted on time.
- Complete a final project evaluation and evaluations of the member. Please use the mid-term and final reports as an opportunity to discuss with your member their progress and growth as well as your evaluation of them and the areas they can work to improve.

**Quarterly Reporting Schedule for VISTA and the Community Ambassador Program Only:**

Quarter	Reporting Period	Due Date
1	October 1 – December 31	First Monday in January
2	January 1 – March 31	First Monday in April
3	April 1 – June 30	First Monday in July
4	July 1 – September 30	First Monday in October

Quarters follow the federal reporting periods. This is not linked to when the member starts their service term. For instance, if your member begins their term on February 2, that would be during the second quarter of the reporting period. The first report that they would be required to submit would be for Quarter 2. *Members completing their service will submit a final Quarterly Report that covers the period of time served after the end of the previous quarter.* For example, a Member ending service on November 15 would submit a final Quarterly report covering October 1 to November 15 before the last day of their service term.

## Required National Days of Service

As an AmeriCorps sponsoring organization, Conservation Legacy programs are *required* to participate in [National Days of Service](#). These days are set by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the organization that oversees our member placements, these required days are listed below. National Days of Service provide an opportunity for members to participate in direct service in their community. Members are encouraged to use the ["Find Volunteer Opportunities"](#) tool on the CNCS website, or organize a service opportunity event at your site.

Highlights of Members serving their communities on National Days of Service (including photographs, news coverage, and data) are shared with partners, funders, and stakeholders to highlight their impact within their communities. Additional guidance, announcements, and reporting requirements will be communicated by Program Staff closer to the day of service.

**[MLK Day](#)**: This day is always the third Monday in January. AmeriCorps members must organize or participate in a MLK Day project in their community. Projects focus on the theme of Dr. King's message of service and equality. In the past, Members have organized food drives, freedom marches, tree plantings, community cleanups or conversations and celebration dinners.

**[9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance](#)**: Members are encouraged to conduct direct service and remembrance activities in their communities on September 11. Projects often support and honor veterans, soldiers, military families, and first responders. Members have helped feed first responders and participated in community remembrance events.

**[National Service Recognition Day](#)**: This day is typically the first Tuesday in April. Local officials around the country will hold events and use media to highlight National Service in their respective towns and cities. Participating in the day will highlight the impact of citizen service, shows support for nonprofit and national service groups, and inspires more residents to serve in their communities.

**[AmeriCorps Week](#)**: CNCS (Corporation for National and Community Service) designates a week each year (typically in early March) that celebrates and promotes the work AmeriCorps members do in their communities. This is an opportunity to invite elected officials to the project and showcase the work or promote AmeriCorps service through social media and news outlets.



## CHAPTER 4: POLICIES

Members must abide by Conservation Legacy policies and procedures because they are paid by Conservation Legacy programs. You and your member are responsible for knowing and following the policies and procedures below, in addition to existing on-site policies. Your program contact is available to provide clarification on policies and appropriate activities.



### GENERAL SAFETY

A first-aid kit and communication device must be with any individual or crew working in the field and be always accessible including at the work site or office, in base camp, and at every excursion beyond base camp should field work be conducted. No individual may administer any prescription or non-prescription medication unless they are properly trained. If epinephrine is delivered in the field, regardless of the apparent success of the treatment, immediate evacuation is required. All injuries and illnesses, both serious and minor, must be reported to both the site supervisor **and** Program Staff immediately.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

All required personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn during project work: disciplinary action will be considered for anyone not wearing the proper PPE. Members who do not have the proper PPE will not be allowed to work and may jeopardize their worker's compensation benefits. Site supervisors should work with their members to review all work tasks to determine if any action will require PPE: should PPE be required; the Host Agency is required to provide it.

### PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism in all elements of operation is integral to the success of all STEWARDS and Conservation Legacy programs. Professionalism is a requirement of all interactions between program participants, site supervisors, project partners, and community members. At times, this can be difficult when dealing with others who choose a less tactful route. We always hold our program participants to the highest standard of professionalism. All members and staff should regard their affiliation with STEWARDS and their Host Agency as a privilege and strive to maintain a positive appearance, attitude, and outlook always during projects and any AmeriCorps activities that they participate in.

All those associated with STEWARDS are expected to be responsible community citizens at work as well as while away from work during their time with any of the programs. Any issues that may come back to the organization from the community will be addressed directly and promptly.

All program members and staff are responsible for an emotionally safe environment and should actively interrupt any inappropriate language or other physical or verbal interplay that is any way sexist, racist, or is a slander toward any person or group of people. All members must respect and make reasonable efforts to accommodate others' religious beliefs and customs as well as their dietary needs. Everyone should also respect the rights and viewpoints of all other members.

All members will keep all relationships with site supervisors and project partners on a strict professional basis. Exclusive or sexual relationships between any participant and supervisor is prohibited, regardless of the person's age. The participant may be dismissed for inappropriate relationships with a superior and any future partnerships with Conservation Legacy may be at risk due to these actions.

All members are required to uphold all policies and abide by the Host Agency's regulations, regardless of personal views or philosophies.

## ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

Essential eligibility requirements for the program must be met. If your member is unable to meet certain requirements, we may be able to assist you with some modification unless it alters the fundamental nature of the program, compromises the health and safety of members or staff, or places an undue financial or administrative burden on the organization.

## DRUG FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

If any member is caught manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using any illegal drug, alcohol, or controlled substance while in the workplace, they are subject to disciplinary action up to dismissal. By their actions, they have committed a serious violation of Conservation Legacy rules, jeopardized Conservation Legacy, and potentially created situations that are unsafe or substantially interfere with job performance.

It is against Conservation Legacy policy to drive a motor vehicle for Conservation Legacy business while impaired by any alcohol or drug, whether legal or illegal. If a member is under the influence of over the counter or prescription medications, or are experiencing any neurological, physical, or emotional problems that hinder safe operation of a vehicle the member should inform their supervisor so the supervisor can make appropriate arrangements.

Any Stewards Member convicted of any criminal drug statute must report the incident to their direct supervisor immediately. Direct supervisors must report the incident to the Corps Director. No article of clothing bearing the AmeriCorps logo will be worn in any establishment that makes most of its money from the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Marijuana use, as stated above, is prohibited while conducting STEWARDS business, including driving Conservation Legacy, Host Agency/site, or personal vehicles. This includes medical or recreational marijuana use, whether the employee holds a valid medical marijuana use card or not. No Stewards Member may possess or consume marijuana in any form while performing Conservation Legacy business including while in a program office, at a work-related event or gathering, or while visiting crews and programs in the field.

In addition, Stewards Members may not be under the influence of controlled substances or have it in their system above the state mandated level during the events listed above. If this policy is violated, the member may be disciplined, up to and including the termination of their service term, depending on the severity of the offense.

## EEO POLICY

We are dedicated to creating an organization that reflects the nation's diversity, hires the best people to do the best job possible, and recognizes that achieving an inclusive and diverse team

is integral to success as a national program. It is critical to our integrity as an organization that all staff and participants working or serving in partnership with STEWARDS are welcome and treated with dignity and respect throughout their service or employment.

## EMERGENCY FUNDS POLICY FOR AMERICORPS VISTA MEMBERS

The CNCS State Office may authorize a onetime expense allowance to cover extraordinary costs, such as reimbursement for theft, fire loss, or special clothing necessitated by severe climate. This allowance is not intended to supplement the living expenses of members. Expense allowances are paid directly to the member by CNCS. If you need emergency expense allowances, contact your assigned Program Staff immediately to file a report with our partners at CNCS.

## EMERGENCY POLICY

### Contact your Program Staff!!

STEWARDS and its associated programs are committed to supporting members when emergency situations arise during their term of service. An emergency is one that poses a potential or actual threat to life or property, such as a natural disaster or active shooting.

### Policy

If there is an emergency in your area of service, follow the order of recommendations of the state and local governments and your agency regarding the need to evacuate an area. Seek safety (evacuation shelters, etc.) and contact your regular Program Contact *as soon as safely possible*. If you anticipate a natural disaster may impact your area of service discuss emergency plans with your member, and then contact your regular Program Staff.

If an emergency causes your member to leave the site, they will continue to receive their living allowance for up to one work week. In the situation that the emergency forces them to leave their site for more than one work week contact your assigned Program Staff to evaluate next steps. Every situation will be different, so it is important you discuss next steps with us over the phone, if possible. In some cases, the emergency may have significantly impacted your site. If your site has been significantly impacted, please notify us *immediately or as soon as safely possible*. STEWARDS will work with you and your member to make appropriate amendments that allow them to complete their service.

### Procedures

In an emergency follow these steps:

- a. Work with your member to make sure emergency plans have been followed to ensure their safety and meet site protocol. Emphasize that the member should follow the orders or recommendations of the state and local governments regarding the need to evacuate an area.
- b. Notify the member they will continue to receive their living allowance for 5 days.
- c. Update your regular Program Staff on any developments that may be occurring at the site.
- d. If the site will be closed long term let STEWARDS staff know immediately to discuss next steps.

## GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN POLICY (Lapse in government appropriations)

If the government is shut down for reasons mandated by Congress, we must facilitate



processes that align with our partnerships with federal agencies. Below is our policy for working with you through a government shutdown. Be advised that our office will be in touch with you and your member when we see a shutdown looming and work with you through the entire process.

*Note: The Stewards Individual Placements government shutdown policy does not impact or supersede any federal employee guidance. Guidance may differ by federal agency.*

## **Policy**

In the case of a lapse in appropriations resulting in the event of a shut-down of the federal government the following policies and procedures apply:

### **AmeriCorps VISTA Member**

All AmeriCorps VISTA Members will continue their service as scheduled until otherwise notified. Any AmeriCorps VISTA Member that is serving at a federal site will need to develop a Telework/Alternative Worksite Plan with their supervisor and Stewards Staff *prior* to the shutdown. (See Appendix: Government Shutdown and Emergency Telework/Alternate Worksite Plan.)

*Justification: AmeriCorps VISTA positions are funded by multiple sources including: The Corporation for National and Community Service, Task Agreements, grant funding and other non-profit partners.*

### **AmeriCorps Member and Interns (paid hourly)**

AmeriCorps Members and Interns (paid hourly) who serve at federal sites will be suspended *immediately following the shutdown* unless exempted formally in writing by a key official from the host agency confirming that the financial assistance agreement(s) may continue. If approved to continue service, AmeriCorps Members, and Interns (paid hourly) will need to develop a Telework/Alternative Worksite Plan with their supervisor and Program Staff *prior* to the shutdown. (See Appendix: Government Shutdown and Emergency Telework/Alternate Worksite Plan.) A member can perform telework to earn hours if they have a telework plan that was approved by their supervisor and Program Staff prior to the shutdown beginning.

## **Procedures**

*All Stewards Members serving at a federal site should follow the following procedure one week prior to a schedule shutdown:*

- Supervisor will review agency shut-down policies and procedures with their member and will communicate to STEWARDS Program Staff if any part of this policy is superseded by federal policy
- If federal policy allows telework for the Member, agency contact will provide written confirmation that financial assistance agreement(s) may continue
- Member and supervisor will contact Program Staff to initiate the telework plan

*Once the Shut-down event occurs:*

- If an approved 32-40 hours/week telework plan is on file and a member checks in with their assigned Program Staff as outlined in their telework plan, the member will continue to be provided with compensation

(stipend).

- If a member is suspended, they will not receive compensation (stipend) for the days they are suspended. There is also no possibility of back pay.

## NEPOTISM POLICY

It is STEWARDS policy that members are selected or hired only if they will not be supervised by an immediate family or a close relative. CNCS defines immediate family as a spouse, domestic partner, parent, or guardian whether by blood or adoption, child whether by blood or adoption, and a close relative by either blood or adoption as a grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or first cousin. CNCS also requires that members not be a relative of a project site staff member, a STEWARDS or CNCS staff member, or member of the board of directors where the Stewards Member reports for service.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

STEWARDS and its associated programs are committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Conservation Legacy requires that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be respectful, business-like, and free of prejudice and harassment.

### Policy

Employees must work, and members must serve, without discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, sexual expression, military expression, or any other characteristic protected by law. STEWARDS prohibits and will not tolerate any such discrimination or harassment.

#### A. Definitions of Harassment

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. Conservation Legacy fully intends to comply with all EEO guidelines.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors between individuals of the same or different gender. These behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendos; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Sex-based harassment is harassment not involving sexual activity or language (e.g., a manager yells only at employees of the other genders, or a manager

gives preferential treatment to a certain gender of employee over another) but may also constitute discrimination if it is severe or pervasive and directed at employees because of their sex.

1. *Other Harassment and unfair treatment.* Harassment based on any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows aversion toward an individual because of a person's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law, and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows aversion toward an individual or group, including through e-mail.

This policy is also intended to cover unfair treatment to any employee who feels that they have been consistently treated in an unfair manner, or have been repetitively disrespected by another member, employee, or partner of STEWARDS.

These policies apply to all members, employees, and supervisors, and prohibit harassment, discrimination, or retaliation by any party. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during work related trips, meetings, social events.

#### **Retaliation Is Prohibited**

STEWARDS prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, or one who participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be cause to evaluate continued projects with individuals who violate this policy.

#### **Grievance Procedures**

STEWARDS requires the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassing conduct must file all grievance with Stewards staff before the conduct becomes severe or pervasive.

Employees who have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this grievance procedure. Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, please promptly report any grievance or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. Conservation Legacy will investigate concerns of the alleged harassment, and if confirmed, it will make every effort to stop it before it becomes severe or pervasive. This is only possible with the cooperation of its members and partners.

#### **Investigation Procedures**

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated by STEWARDS's executive leadership. The investigation may include

individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have another relevant knowledge. Efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process to an extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

#### **Discipline**

Discipline for conduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be handled appropriately. Discipline will include any steps to assure that conduct will not be repeated.

#### **Procedures**

If a situation makes your member feel uncomfortable or unsafe, they have permission to physically leave the space where the harassment occurred.

### **SERVICE-RELATED TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY (AmeriCorps *VISTA only*)**

If your member is required to travel for a service-related activity and is unable to use public transportation or a company owned or rented vehicle, and they drive their personal vehicle, they must be reimbursed by your hosting organization according to their reimbursement policy.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION POLICY**

Most AmeriCorps State & National and AmeriCorps VISTA members are ineligible for unemployment benefits as most states do not recognize AmeriCorps members as employees.

## CHAPTER 5: PROCEDURES



### RISK MANAGEMENT

Keeping Members safe is the most important part of our job. We are always available to assist sites in ensuring that members are performing their duties safely. Below are a few key risk management issues to review and discuss with your member. You should have a plan that includes who your member should contact in case of emergency and who they should talk to if they feel unsafe. Program staff are available to work with you and your member to create a plan if your site does not have one in place.

Failure to comply with safety procedures or to provide a safe working environment could result in your site losing the ability to host a Member.

#### Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

Many organizations have processes for assessing hazards on a job site. If your organization is unfamiliar with JHAs or the process of risk assessment, please contact our office for resources and assistance. We expect that members and their sites are assessing and mitigating hazards for all job duties.

#### Chainsaws, Heavy Machinery & Tool Training

Tools and equipment should only be operated by individuals who have been trained in how to safely use them. If your member needs to operate special tools or machinery, please confirm that they have received adequate training per your agency's policies. If your member will be using chainsaws, Program staff must be notified to ensure proper workers' compensation coverage and training is provided.

#### Work at Heights

*Working on roofs or on ladders above 6 feet is not allowed* per Conservation Legacy's workers' compensation policy. In general, working at heights is one of the most dangerous activities that exist, and all precautions need to be made including the following:

- No working on roofs unless approved by the Program's Executive Director.
- Those under age 18 may not perform any work at heights.
- Any work where a person is exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more requires risk mitigation whether it is on ladders, up a tree, over a ledge, etc. Mitigation will require guardrails, safety harnesses, and/or personal fall arrest systems in accordance with all current OSHA and industry standards. (See OSHA standards 1910.25-28 and 1926 Subpart M)
- Any risk of injury from falling objects should be mitigated through closing off areas, using a hanging net, and posting warning signs as appropriate.
- When working at heights, before any work is completed, a staff person familiar with OSHA regulations must provide written confirmation of the structural integrity of walking surfaces that are at height and identify hidden hazards. Crews must consider air temperature, wind conditions, and UV exposure.
- Absolutely no chain-sawing at height and no ladders on elevated surfaces, trees, et cetera.

## Search and Rescue Participation

Members may be asked to participate in Search and Rescue operations; Members must notify Program Staff before going into the field. During Search and Rescue operations, the Host Site is responsible for the member's wellbeing, but Conservation Legacy wants to ensure that the member also have support after the event should they need it. The physical and mental health and wellbeing of our members is important to us, and Program Staff may deny the member permission to participate in an event at any time.

## Administratively Determined (AD) Detail

Members occasionally but rarely get the opportunity to participate in an AD Detail facilitated by their host site. Those that want the professional experience can participate with the following caveats:

- Before a member accept an AD detail, they must review the detail with Program Staff to ensure that the time away from their service site does not negatively affect their project or required AmeriCorps hours. (This generally means no details extending over two weeks will be approved.)
- During their AD detail they will be working as an employee of the host site and therefore not covered by Workers Compensation provided through their participation in Conservation Legacy programming. They will also not be able to count hours worked on AD toward their AmeriCorps hours and cannot record them on their timesheet.

Program Staff will work closely with you to determine a member's AD detail approval.

## Vehicles

If a member needs to drive as part of their position, please follow the policies and protocols of the host site to comply. *Use public transportation or a company vehicle when possible.* Hands free communication devices must be used while driving, and texting is prohibited.

### **AMERICORPS and STEWARDS INTERNS (paid hourly)**

Additionally, Conservation Legacy will need to ensure that members are eligible to drive per the organizational insurance requirements through their completion of the Driver's Consent Release Form and uploading a copy of their Driver's license during their enrollment paperwork process. To be eligible to drive, in addition to passing the Conservation Legacy Driver Eligibility, members must be at least 21 years of age or have possessed a valid license for at least 3 years. If the host site requires members to drive for their term, they will be ineligible if:

- Any suspensions or revocations will be based on the original date of infraction. Any driver whose license has been suspended or revoked will not be approved to drive for 3 years from the original date of infraction.
- The member has *one or more* of the following in the past 3 years:
  - Driving while under the influence of drugs
  - Negligent homicide arising out of use of a motor vehicle (Gross Negligence)
  - Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
  - Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
  - Operating a motor vehicle without the owner's authority (grand theft)
  - Reckless driving
  - Hit & run driving
- The member has *two or more* of the following in the past 3 years:
  - Operating a motor vehicle during a period of suspension or revocation

- Permitting an unlicensed person to drive
- Speeding contest
- The member has *three or more* of the following or any of the above in the past 3 years:
  - Accidents (regardless of fault)
  - Moving violations

#### **AMERICORPS VISTA**

Due to the Federal Tort Claims Act and Federal Employee Compensation Act, member's service-related travel includes third-party liability and personal injury coverage. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is not responsible for damage to a member's vehicle, so adequate insurance coverage should be maintained on any vehicle the member drives. If the member is involved in an accident, they must immediately notify the police, comply with local requirements, and report the incident to Program Staff and CNCS as soon as possible as additional actions and paperwork must be completed within two days of the incident. They should not make statements regarding responsibility to anyone other than government investigating officers. See Chapter 7 of the VISTA Member Handbook for the complete policy and procedure. (The VISTA Member Handbook can be accessed through [www.vistacampus.gov](http://www.vistacampus.gov).)

## MEDICAL INCIDENT PROCEDURE & WORKERS' COMPENSATION

In the event of a work-related injury or illness, during work hours, we expect site supervisors to apply agency protocols and emergency response systems. *If the member requires professional medical attention, please contact us immediately, and ensure the member go to the closest preferred provider or hospital or call 911.* Below we have outlined our policies and procedures for any medical emergency and/or work-related injury. (please see [Workers Compensation](#) folder for all relevant documents)

### **Incident Report Forms (IRFs)**

Program staff are responsible for starting an IRF for any incident/accident that involves a Member, whether this is filled out by the member or program staff. If an incident does occur, the member may be asked to provide details, including follow-up information, before the incident can be closed.

### **Medical Care**

If a member is injured, they should seek medical care at the closest medical facility and then notify Program staff. Non-emergency injuries should be treated at the nearest medical clinic. Use the Emergency Room only for more severe emergencies, or if no clinic is available. After the incident is reported, information will be provided regarding where the member should seek follow up treatment. For each medical visit, the member should be sure to have a Letter to Treating Provider with them and have the doctor/provider complete the form.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation insurance is for the protection of workers who receive an injury or disease as a direct result of their occupation. Members (including those paid hourly) are covered under Conservation Legacy's Workers' Compensation insurance while fully enrolled in a term of service. AmeriCorps VISTA Members are covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA), administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP).

### **Filing a Workers' Compensation Claim**

*Member (or supervisor, if member is unable) must file a Workers' Compensation claim with Program staff within 48 hours of the injury or illness. Contact program staff before the member seeks medical care unless it is an emergency.*

- The member (or supervisor) contacts Program staff to start the claim – the member's information will need to be provided so that Program staff can complete the IRF and other documentation required for a Workers' Compensation claim.
- Program staff will compile and submit a report to our Workers' Compensation insurance company for AmeriCorps members and Interns (paid hourly) or CNCS/OWCP for AmeriCorps VISTA members.
- The insurance company or OWCP (in the case of AmeriCorps VISTA members) will review the claim and accept or deny it. They may contact the injured member for follow up information. All follow up communication regarding the claim will occur between the insurance company or OWCP and the member. Some information may be sent via the postal service.

### **Follow-up & Restriction of work duties**

Any injured member who has filed a Workers' Compensation claim is required to receive a doctor's clearance for future work duty. Clearance ranges from *full return to work to light duty to a zero clearance* to return to work. Injured members cannot return to unrestricted work without the doctor's clearance. Site supervisors are encouraged to provide light duty work projects. If a member's injury or illness was not work-related and they cannot perform their basic job duties, please contact Program staff.

If the member is unable to return to work or there is not enough light duty work to keep the member occupied while they recover, please contact Program Staff so that we can discuss the options available to you and your member. For longer-term injuries, the member may need to be suspended and/or released from duty early. Program staff will work with you and the member to determine the best course of action.

*All follow up paperwork, doctor's notes, and work restrictions need to be submitted to both the site supervisor and Program staff. When in doubt, call us. Although we do not directly manage member Workers' Compensation claims, we can help trouble-shoot issues and clarify the sometimes-confusing process.*

## **WELLNESS AND WELL BEING**

As a Conservation Legacy Program participant, your member has access to the Employee and Member Assistance Program. This program provides a counseling service that covers topics such as:

- Stress Support & Management
- Career Advice
- Issues/Thoughts deriving from Mental Instability or Trauma
- Personal Finances (Includes managing your Retirement)
- Death & Grief
- Eating Disorders
- Work-Related Relationship Issues
- Non-Work-Related Relationship Issues

Your member may call Unum an unlimited number of times, free of charge at 1-800-854-1446 to access this service. Your member may also access resources online at

[www.unum.com/lifebalance](http://www.unum.com/lifebalance)

Group # 0913486



Billing will be made directly to Conservation Legacy. You will be notified if your request does not fall within the Conservation Legacy program by Unum.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

## **AMERICORPS VISTAS**

**CNCS provides access to free telehealth (i.e., virtual care) alongside the elected health benefit. Visit <https://americorpsvista.imglobal.com> for more information regarding this benefit.**

## **DISCIPLINE AND PERFORMANCE ISSUES**

The philosophy of Conservation Legacy is to correct inappropriate behavior or performance through a process that allows members the opportunity for learning and improvement. Many members are brand-new to the workforce and may need a little guidance on how to meet expectations of their position. With that said, if, after you set clear expectations and directly communicate with the member, and you do not see the improvement you expect, then disciplinary action may be needed. You can best assess the correct course of action; however, ***you are encouraged to contact us if you feel more formal disciplinary procedures such as a corrective action contract, suspension, or termination are needed.*** In general, we are here to support you and your site at any time if expectations are not being met.

### **Member Resignation or Termination**

#### **Resignation**

Should a member choose to resign and leave the program early, the member must contact Program staff with the dates served and reason for terminating the service contract.

If the member is enrolled in AmeriCorps (VISTA), they should understand that resignation implies forfeiting the remainder of the living stipend and the entire AmeriCorps Education Award. If resigning because of a compelling circumstance (e.g., as a death in the family, or similar circumstances outlined in your Member Agreement), the member may be eligible for a partial Education Award.

#### **Termination for Cause**

Termination of a member for cause cannot occur *without the prior approval of Program staff*. In most cases, the supervisor will already be in communication with us regarding the behavioral issue at hand and we will be working together to decide the best course of action. At times, however, a supervisor may need to suspend a member immediately if the infraction is deemed inexcusable by both the site supervisor and the Program staff or is a blatant disregard of the following policies:

- Purchasing, possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during service or any service-related activity or event;
- Physical altercation or intimidation;
- Verbal abuse or threats;
- Immediately dangerous practices or gross negligence.

If the site supervisor and Program staff decide termination is appropriate, written notification will be given of the decision, outlining the term served and the reason for termination.

## SITE COMPLIANCE

To confirm that each site is properly utilizing its AmeriCorps (VISTA) resources, Program Staff will complete compliance reviews through the application process, check-in calls, quarterly reports, and annual site visits. Following these reviews, Program Staff will contact the site supervisor if any noncompliance issues are identified or if any follow up is required.

In some cases, a written notice of noncompliance will be sent to the site supervisor of a project site, with a requested acknowledgement of receipt by signature. Issues of noncompliance will be considered when reviewing renewal applications and may lead to the closing of a site.

# CHAPTER 6: AMERICORPS



## OVERVIEW OF AMERICORPS

[AmeriCorps](#) is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) that works with non-profit organizations to provide young people meaningful service opportunities throughout the United States.

AmeriCorps members, over 75,000 each year, support organizations focused on a variety of domestic service initiatives that meet critical community needs such as poverty alleviation, conservation, affordable housing, community development, and education.

As AmeriCorps members, participants have committed to a term of service that ranges from 8 weeks to 12 months. Please note that, as an AmeriCorps member, participants are *not* employees but are *members* in a national service program. As such, they receive a living allowance, *not* a salary.

AmeriCorps' support is critical to our program providing participants with positive service experiences. Part of our partnership involves adhering to high standards of reporting: this includes accurately reporting on project accomplishments, hours, and successes and challenges. Participant's thoroughness in reporting is vital to the continued success of our partnership with AmeriCorps.

### Benefits of Service

In addition to connecting our members to land management agencies and meaningful service work, AmeriCorps members who complete their service earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. AmeriCorps members also receive a modest living allowance during their term of service. Members enrolled for a year-long term of service are eligible for health benefits. Members should direct questions about their living allowance, health insurance and education award to Program Staff.

## AMERICORPS HOURS

To successfully complete an AmeriCorps term and be eligible for an education award, members *must complete all three* of the following requirements:

- Acquire the minimum service hours for AmeriCorps position, or 365 days of service for AmeriCorps VISTA Members
- Serve through their term of service end date
- Submit all necessary paperwork.

Members sign an AmeriCorps member agreement that outlines their term of service and the minimum AmeriCorps hours they are required to complete. You and your member should review their progress periodically to ensure they are on track to completing their hours by the end of their term.

### PTO, Holidays, and other Leave of Absence

*See Section 3.* When determining and approving time off, the site needs to factor in the total AmeriCorps hours required of the term. *PTO does not count towards AmeriCorps service hours*, therefore taking too much time off could jeopardize your member's ability to successfully complete their AmeriCorps term. If a member misses too many hours, they

may need to be assigned extra hours of work to complete the minimum required hours of their AmeriCorps term. *If you are concerned that your member will not complete their AmeriCorps hours within their term, please call Program Staff immediately.*

### **Project Hours**

Project hours include any service hours that are part of accomplishing projects as described in the member's position description, including drive time\*, preparation, and logistics, et cetera. This will be the bulk of their work. (Drive time does not include daily commute to/from their residence to their work site.)

### **Education & Training Hours**

Education and training hours include any orientations, trainings, or supplemental educational activities you participate in. These hours typically do not result in project accomplishments.

To be eligible to receive their education award, members must participate in training, professional development, and education opportunities. However, *no more than 20%* of their time may be allocated to development and education.

## **AMERICORPS CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

Prior to the start of their term, members must submit to an FBI and state criminal history background check, as well as a National Sex Offender Registry check conducted by our office, or by CNCS in the case of AmeriCorps VISTA members. Certain offenses can result in being ineligible for enrollment in AmeriCorps. If our background check deems a member ineligible, Program Staff will contact you and your member immediately. Please note that *all members must complete a three-part Criminal History Check* even if they have already completed background checks with your agency/ site. *This is a requirement of AmeriCorps. It is the responsibility of your member to consent to, initiate, and complete all three checks.* These checks are provided through two third-party vendors, all information is provided to a member through their Silk Road Onboarding account and information will be emailed to them directly from these vendors via the address provided in their application. *A member cannot start on site or be added to payroll until all three parts of the Criminal History Check are returned* and these checks must not contain offenses that make them ineligible to serve

One reason AmeriCorps requires a criminal background check is to ensure that AmeriCorps members are safe to work with "vulnerable populations". Working with vulnerable populations is defined as: "The ability on more than one occasion to approach, observe, or communicate with, an individual, through physical proximity or other means, including but not limited to, electronic or telephonic communication." Vulnerable populations include the following:

- 18 years old and younger
- 60 years old and older
- And/or individuals with disabilities
- If you provide an alternate work email address for your AmeriCorps Member, they are considered to work with Vulnerable Populations.

For members to be allowed to work with vulnerable populations during their term, three-part criminal history check including the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR), a Federal, and State background check must be completed and adjudicated prior to the start of their term.

Members are not permitted to start service until our office has received all three adjudicated criminal history checks.

## AMERICORPS PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the CNCS, members may not engage in the following activities. Please ensure that your member's work plan and all future service work *does not include any of these activities*:

- Attempting to influence the passage or defeat of 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 engaging in any form of religious proselytizing
- Raising funds for his or her living allowance (*not applicable to AmeriCorps VISTA members*)
- Raising funds for an organization's operating expenses or endowment (*not applicable to AmeriCorps VISTA members*)
- Writing grant applications for AmeriCorps funding or for any other funding provided by CNCS
- Writing grants applications for funding provided by any other federal agency (*not applicable to AmeriCorps VISTA members*)

*Also, members may not provide a direct benefit to:*

- For-profit entities
- Labor unions
- Partisan political organizations
- Organizations engaged in the religious activities described in the preceding sub clause, unless grant funds are not used to support the religious activities
- Nonprofit entities that fail to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c) (3) of U.S. Code Title 26
- Organizing or conducting voter registration drives. In addition, Corporation funds may not be used to conduct a voter registration drive.
- Providing abortion services or making referrals to such services, this includes members enrolled prior to October 1, 2009. In the past, AmeriCorps members have joined with clinics that offer abortion services and partnered with Planned Parenthood chapters to work on public health education topics. The new stipulation will allow members to volunteer or provide their services on their own time, but not while affiliated with AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps members also may not be a candidate for public office in a partisan election during their AmeriCorps service term. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens (including their right to vote) and may participate in the above activities on their initiative, on non-

AmeriCorps time and using non-CNCS funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.

## AMERICORPS FUNDING REGULATIONS RELATED TO NON-DISPLACEMENT AND NON-DUPLICATION

As reviewed in the initial application process, a site's AmeriCorps member may not duplicate activities that are already available in the area they serve including activities provided by government agencies. In addition, a site's AmeriCorps member may not displace or partially displace an employee or volunteer of the organization including infringing upon promotional opportunities for an employee, supplanting the hiring of employed workers, or performing duties assigned to an employee currently working, recently resigned, or discharged, on leave, on strike, or who is subject to a reduction of force.

**THANK YOU!**

