

## **Introduction**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. By implementing several programs including AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, CNCS provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country. More than two million Americans will serve through these programs to support thousands of national and community nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and local agencies to meet community needs in economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veteran and military families and other critical areas. National and community service programs work closely with traditional volunteer organizations to broaden, deepen, and strengthen the ability of citizens to contribute not only to their communities, but also to our nation.

## **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps**

One of the programs of CNCS, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), is a full-time, residential, national service program whose mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. Each year hundreds of young adults, ages 18-24, serve for 10 months as AmeriCorps NCCC members on diverse teams of 8-12 people at one of four regional campuses.

AmeriCorps NCCC teams are assigned 3-6 service projects throughout their 10-month service term, primarily in the states or territories within their region. Service projects help to meet critical community needs in the areas of natural and other disasters, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, energy conservation, and urban and rural development. Teams are available to support community and faith-based organizations, national nonprofits, schools, local-, regional-, and federal municipalities, national and state parks, and Native American and Alaskan Native tribes.

Throughout AmeriCorps NCCC's history, teams have assisted communities in preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from the effects of natural disasters; constructed and rehabilitated low-income housing; built and repaired trails; led and managed community volunteers; installed energy efficient modifications to homes, businesses and public facilities; and addressed many other local needs. Since 1994, more than 34,000 people have served in AmeriCorps NCCC, providing assistance to hundreds of thousands of Americans.

## **AmeriCorps NCCC Members**

Members are young adults, ranging in age from 18-24 years old, and represent a wide variety of socio-economic, cultural, geographic, and educational backgrounds. They include those with graduate degrees and some who are working towards their high school equivalency diplomas. All members have earned their place on an AmeriCorps NCCC team by demonstrating a commitment to serve communities and a desire to make the nation stronger through 10 months of national service. The rewards for their service include: an increased understanding about how active citizenship can make a positive difference in the lives of others and build stronger communities, technical and interpersonal skills that will serve them well in the future, and an education award that will enable them to either continue their education or reduce educational debt.

## **AmeriCorps NCCC Service Projects**

AmeriCorps NCCC accomplishes its mission by working with local community organizations and groups to help meet a community need that would not be fully addressed without additional assistance. Rather than providing cash grants, the AmeriCorps NCCC program places teams to serve with sponsoring organizations. These projects are generally 3 to 13 weeks in duration, but will vary depending on the specific requirements of each project. Projects must provide full-time service opportunities to engage a team of 8-12 members effectively. Transportation and some basic tools are provided by AmeriCorps NCCC; however, project sponsors are required to provide materials, specialized tools, orientation, training, and technical supervision. The project sponsor is responsible for arranging lodging for the team and works with AmeriCorps NCCC staff prior to the start of the project to arrange access to a kitchen so the team may prepare meals and other logistical needs.

# AmeriCorps NCCC Project Focus Areas

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## NATURAL AND OTHER DISASTERS

Natural and Other Disaster projects address the needs of communities affected by floods, hurricanes, wildfires, and other disasters. These projects span the entire disaster cycle from preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Natural and Other Disaster projects aim to protect communities and habitats from disaster and fire damage, strengthen communities' abilities to prepare for and mitigate disasters, help communities to more thoroughly or quickly rebuild after disasters, and strengthen communities' abilities to respond to and recover from disasters. In addition, projects often help improve or restore housing and assist in more thoroughly or efficiently meeting medical and basic human needs of those in disaster areas. Furthermore, many Natural and Other Disaster projects aim to enhance organizational capacity and capabilities to provide disaster services to communities nationwide. Examples of service activities for these projects include: supporting disaster recovery centers, shelters, and facilities; preparing and distributing meals or water; mucking and gutting flood or storm-damaged homes and buildings; debris removal; roof tarping; home and other infrastructure rebuilding; fuels reduction or flood mitigation; surveying community assets; and distributing educational materials and preparedness kits.

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

Infrastructure Improvement projects address the needs of communities by contributing to the safety and well-being of citizens through the repair and building of public structures. Infrastructure Improvement projects aim to improve quality and accessibility of public infrastructure, preserve cultural and historic integrity of communities, and enhance public spaces. Examples of service activities for these projects include: building and repairing wheelchair ramps, boardwalks and footbridges; assembling playgrounds; repairing and painting public facilities; renovating museums, historical buildings and cemeteries; and restoring and refurbishing picnic areas and campsites.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION

In the tradition of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, Environmental Stewardship and Conservation projects address the needs of communities by helping them maintain and protect their natural resources. Environmental Stewardship and Conservation projects aim to preserve, protect, and enhance parks, natural habitats, and at-risk ecosystems as well as improve knowledge and understanding of environmental conservation practices in communities nationwide. Examples of service activities for these projects include: trail building and maintenance; planting trees; removing invasive plant species; cleaning up rivers, streams, and wetlands; and facilitating environmental education workshops and camps for youth.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy Conservation projects address the needs of communities by helping citizens to more effectively and efficiently utilize their local resources. Energy Conservation projects aim to increase community energy efficiency, increase use and application of sustainable energy technology, and improve knowledge and understanding of sustainable energy practices in communities nationwide. Examples of service activities for these projects include: conducting energy efficiency assessments; assisting with installations of energy efficient modifications to homes, businesses, and public facilities; developing and improving recycling programs; performing home weatherization projects; and facilitating educational programming on energy sustainability and conservation practices.

## **URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Urban and Rural Development projects address the needs of communities in ways that improve the quality of life for citizens. Urban and Rural Development projects aim to improve community food security and nutritional practices, more thoroughly or efficiently meet medical and basic human needs, improve public safety and community resilience, and improve access to economic opportunities and housing. Other aims of Urban and Rural Development projects include seeking to improve student academic engagement and performance, expand public engagement in local communities, and preserve cultural or historical integrity of communities. Examples of service activities for these projects include: supporting homeless shelters, food banks, and youth and family service organizations; renovating and constructing homes for those in need; leading neighborhood and community revitalization projects; community and school gardens and summer feeding programs; assisting students, parents, and families through tutoring and afterschool programming; and helping to provide employment counseling and health awareness to citizens.

# The Application Process: An Overview

Applying for an AmeriCorps NCCC team is a two-step process. The first step is submitting a Project Concept Form (PCF) for review by AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff. If the Project Concept Form is approved, you will be invited to complete the second step and submit a full application for review by AmeriCorps NCCC regional staff.

## STEP 1: COMPLETE AN AMERICORPS NCCC PROJECT CONCEPT FORM (PCF)

The Project Concept Form serves as an opportunity to provide an overview of your organization, to briefly identify the community need to be addressed, and to propose a service project that can help to meet that need. AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff use the Project Concept Form to assess whether the proposed project fits within the scope of the five **AmeriCorps NCCC Project Focus Areas** (pages 3 and 4). If the concept of the project has been found to meet basic requirements, you will be invited to complete a full application for an AmeriCorps NCCC team.

## STEP 2: COMPLETE THE AMERICORPS NCCC SERVICE PROJECT APPLICATION

If you have been invited to apply, a staff member from the AmeriCorps NCCC Region that corresponds with your state will send the full AmeriCorps NCCC Service Project Application to you in a fillable PDF format. While you are in the process of completing your application, staff members for your AmeriCorps NCCC Region are available to provide you with technical guidance, should you solicit it. Regional contact information can be found at the end of this instructional guide or on our website (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/ncccsponsor>). Each AmeriCorps NCCC region has specific deadlines for Project Concept Forms and Service Project Application submissions based on the dates for which you are requesting a team. Deadlines and notifications may be acquired through your AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff.

## SERVICE PROJECT APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Every Service Project Application submitted should outline project goals and activities. All approved Service Project Applications must meet the following criteria. The proposed project:

- Meets a compelling community need(s) that falls within the scope of at least one AmeriCorps NCCC Project Focus Area.
- Has clearly defined outputs and outcomes.
- Has a clearly outlined work plan, with a weekly and monthly work schedule that details at least 40 hours of service activities, per member, for an AmeriCorps NCCC Team of 8-12 members.
- Has a clearly outlined training plan with training that corresponds to the proposed tasks and any potential safety hazards.
- Has identified (at least) one Site Supervisor to provide guidance, weekly planning, and supervision. This supervisor will also be accessible during the team's scheduled service time.
- Has identified housing that meets AmeriCorps NCCC standards. See the **LOCATIONS** section (pages 9-11) for more information.
- Demonstrates the organization has a plan to support the safety and security of an AmeriCorps NCCC team and will provide safety and security training to the team during their on-site orientation.
- Demonstrates an understanding of service learning and identifies continued learning/teaching opportunities throughout the service project.
- Has outlined a sustainability plan that demonstrates how the work performed by the AmeriCorps NCCC team will be built upon or maintained.

All Service Project Applications are evaluated using a standard criteria set and scored using the ratings below.

<b>Review Rubric Rating Scale</b>	
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Exceeds Criterion</b>	A high-quality, detailed response that addresses all aspects of the Selection Criteria and exceeds some. Strengths are substantial and solid. No weaknesses are identified, or any weakness has a minimal effect on the overall quality of the response. A high confidence that the proposed activities will achieve and exceed the anticipated results.
<b>Meets Criterion</b>	A quality response that addresses most or all aspects of the Selection Criteria. Strengths are substantial, but do not exceed what is required. No weaknesses are identified, or any weakness has a minimal effect on the overall quality of the response. Proposed activities should achieve the anticipated results.
<b>Partially Meets Criterion</b>	Response addresses some to most aspects of the Selection Criteria, but makes assumptions and leaves aspects unexplained. Strengths are not significant, and some weaknesses affect the overall quality of the response, demonstrating room for improvement. It is unclear how the proposed activities will achieve all of the anticipated results.
<b>Does Not Meet Criterion</b>	A low-quality or very weak response that does not address most of the Selection Criteria. Overall response is lacking or inadequate, making assumptions in key elements. Weaknesses relating to vague or inaccurate detail are numerous or significantly outweigh the strengths. There is low or zero confidence that the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

Each application undergoes multiple reviews by AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff. Following this review process, the Region Director reviews and authorizes a list of projects that have been recommended by fellow staff. The assignment of teams to projects is contingent upon the availability of sufficient funds for the program, the availability of teams, the frequency of prior team assignment, and regional and national priorities.

# Step 1: AmeriCorps NCCC Project Concept Form Instructions

The Project Concept Form (PCF) serves as an opportunity to provide an overview of your organization, to briefly identify the community need to be addressed and to propose a service project that can help to meet that need. AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff uses the Project Concept Form to assess whether the proposed project fits within the scope of at least one of the **AmeriCorps NCCC Project Focus Areas** (pages 3 and 4). If the concept of the project has been found to meet basic requirements, you will be invited to complete a full application for an AmeriCorps NCCC team.

Please use the information below as a guide for completing the Project Concept Form if you are a prospective sponsor interested in applying for an AmeriCorps NCCC team. The instructions correspond to each question on the Project Concept Form. Answer each question as fully as possible. During this step, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff members have the ability to provide you with technical guidance, should you solicit it. If you have any questions or need additional clarification about any item on the Project Concept Form, please contact them. A directory of AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus contact information is located at the end of this document or on our website (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/ncccsponsor>).

The Project Concept Form consists of the following components:

- I. Applicant Information
- II. Project Information
- III. Other
- IV. Additional Questions
- V. Project Focus Areas
- VI. Narratives
- VII. Locations of Service and Team Lodging
- VIII. Authorize and Submit

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Enter your organization's name and contact information. Organizations may jointly apply for an AmeriCorps NCCC team under a single application. If you are applying with a partner agency or "Secondary Sponsor," please include their information in the corresponding blanks. Please contact your AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus should you have further questions about jointly applying for a team.
2. Enter your organization's EIN and the EIN of the secondary sponsor (if applicable). Known as the Employer Identification Number (EIN) or the Federal Tax Identification Number, the EIN is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to business entities operating in the United States for the purposes of identification. This number allows CNCS to quickly and accurately identify all organizations that have received CNCS resources for reporting and tracking purposes.
3. Select all of the organization types that apply to your organization. Only organizations that fall within the types specified here are eligible to apply. If you have questions on what category your organization may fall into, please contact the representative at your AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus.
4. The Authorized Representative is your organization's designated representative that is legally authorized and certified to submit the Project Concept Form and the Service Project Application. This person is often referred to as the Project Sponsor and will be the primary person the AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff communicates with regarding the allocation of the AmeriCorps NCCC team and organizational support. This person should also be the signatory on the Service Project Application, the Project Completion Report, and, if approved, the Sponsor Agreement between AmeriCorps NCCC and your organization.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

5. Please provide the title of the project for which you are applying. This title will be used to distinguish between different applications if your organization submits multiple applications to CNCS, so please consider language that most aptly describes the project.

Enter in your estimated completion time in weeks. This should be calculated for a team of 8 to 12 members each serving at least 40 hours per week. Please keep in mind that AmeriCorps NCCC teams often complete projects faster than anticipated.

Indicate the proposed start and end dates and whether these dates are fixed (not changeable based on the nature or timeline of the project) or flexible (able to be reasonably changed). This will allow AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff to better arrange logistics and possibly combine the deployments of multiple projects within a specific time frame.

## OTHER

6. This question asks for information about how you were made aware of the AmeriCorps NCCC program. Please select all options that apply from the checkbox options. If there is not an appropriate choice, please select "Other" and provide a brief description.
7. This question addresses funding and labor resources that your organization already receives in relation to this proposed project.
8. This question also addresses funding and labor resources that your organization already receives in relation to this proposed project.
9. If your organization has ever received services of an AmeriCorps NCCC team, please enter the number of teams your organization received going back to 1994. Additionally, please provide the month and year your organization last received a team. This is one criteria used to determine how we allocate our limited resources.
10. AmeriCorps NCCC has effectively partnered with sponsoring organizations that also utilize the services of Youth Corps that require fees. Fee-for-Service is defined as an agreement in which a youth or community service organization pays fees or reimburses costs to an organization in exchange for member or team support. AmeriCorps NCCC does not require a fee, but finds value in partnering with organizations that do. AmeriCorps NCCC makes every effort to augment and support these local collaborations as much as possible when partnering with sponsoring organizations. Please specify if your organization has ever had a fee-for-service arrangement and, if so, describe how your organization plans to incorporate your existing partnership with AmeriCorps NCCC.

## PROJECT FOCUS AREAS

11. You are required to enter a project focus area of community need to be addressed. Please select from the checkboxes the primary area of community need the project will address; *please refer to the AmeriCorps NCCC Project Focus Areas section on pages 3 and 4 for definitions of each category.*

## NARRATIVES

The "Narratives" section of the Project Concept Form includes two topics. Each topic consists of questions you must answer. When completing the narrative topics, be sure to:

- Label each sub-topic clearly.
- Enter text in the single-spaced format within the fields.
- Type both the question and answer.
- Include activities for the entire span of the proposed project period.

**TIP:** You may prefer to answer questions first in a word processing document, such as Microsoft Word, and then paste your response into the fillable PDF format. Avoid using special formatting or tables within the fields as it may not format correctly. To remove special formatting, you can utilize the notepad tool or equivalent that are standard with most home computer systems. If you find your organization's responses are too long for the fields provided, please provide an attachment noting the section and question number above your continued narrative. Multiple narrative responses may be included in the same attachment, provided everything is clearly labeled.

Organizations may jointly apply for an AmeriCorps NCCC team under a single application. If you are applying with a partner agency or "Secondary Sponsor", please include their information in the appropriate questions (questions 1 and 2) and in the narrative responses. This includes the Need Narrative, Site Location(s) and the work plan in the Project Design Narrative. Please contact the AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus should you have further questions about jointly applying for a team.

## 12. Need Narrative

Within this field, please:

- A. Describe the overall mission of your organization.
- B. Provide a brief overview of the community need.
- C. Describe what your organization is currently doing to address the need.
- D. Describe how the project and an AmeriCorps NCCC team will meet the need.
- E. Include the geographic area to be served.
- F. Provide information about the demographics of the community being served.

## 13. Project Design Narrative

Within this field, please:

- A. Describe the service tasks and activities your organization is requesting an AmeriCorps NCCC team perform.
- B. Provide the goals and desired outcomes expected from the involvement of AmeriCorps NCCC and how they are related to the community need and mission of your organization.
- C. Include brief information about the accessibility of the work site for persons requiring mobility, vision, or hearing accommodation. Because teams are not assigned to the project when the Project Concept Form is submitted, accommodations may or may not be required. If a member of the assigned AmeriCorps NCCC team has special accessibility requirements, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff will work with you to arrange accommodation if the project has been approved.
- D. Describe the lodging arrangements you are exploring for the team. This is where you should further explain information about disability accommodation and information on laundry, kitchen, and shower availability.

## LOCATIONS

### 14. Primary Location of Service

The Location of Service is the physical location a team will be performing work during their time with your organization. AmeriCorps NCCC uses this information to ensure the safety of teams and to report where teams are performing work across the country. Additionally, AmeriCorps NCCC requires a Site Supervisor to provide technical guidance, training, and instruction during the service project. The Site Supervisor should be an individual who currently has the technical skills and abilities to perform the tasks at the project site and will train members on completing the project tasks.



In this section please:

- A. Enter the name of your organization.
- B. Provide the street address, city, state and zip code where members will be serving, which may or may not be the location of the organization listed.
- C. Check the box if the project site is accessible for persons requiring mobility, vision or hearing accommodation. Please describe in more detail accessibility in the "Project Design" narrative as stated above. Because teams are not assigned to the project when the application is submitted, accommodations may or may not be needed. If a member of the assigned AmeriCorps NCCC team has special accessibility requirements, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff will work with you to arrange accommodation should the project receive approval.
- D. Enter the name of the supervisor that will provide consistent, daily site supervision, at the actual work site, throughout the team's service.
- E. Include the Organizational Title for the Site Supervisor.
- F. Add the Site Supervisor's phone number. Providing a cell phone number is strongly encouraged. Also, include the Site Supervisor's e-mail if available.

**15. Primary Lodging Site**

If selected for service, the sponsoring organization is required to provide lodging for the team and, where applicable, is responsible for any fees associated with the lodging space. Accommodations should be responsive to the following requirements in the table below.

ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS	
1	Adequate space for 8-12 members with separate female and male sleeping facilities.
2	Access to bathroom, shower, and laundry facilities.
3	Availability of cooking and food storage facilities or meals provided by sponsoring organization. Providing food and/or meals is encouraged, but not required in order to receive a team.
4	Availability of cleaning supplies and basic cleaning tools proportionate to the size of the accommodations and team. AmeriCorps NCCC suggests basic supplies such as toilet paper, trash bags, cleaning supplies, light bulbs and shower curtains be available at the lodging site.
5	Measures in place for the safety and security of members, their personal belongings, and equipment.
6	Reasonable driving distance to/from project site location (inquire with your Regional Staff for specifics).

**Note:** Some AmeriCorps NCCC Regions may be able to provide lodging for projects at their campus facilities. When available, these projects must be within a reasonable driving distance of the Regional Campus. Please inquire to learn more about availability and driving distance requirements for your Regional Staff. If this lodging option applies to you, please select "NCCC Campus" in the Type of Lodging field.

In this section, please enter the lodging arrangements you are exploring for the team. During this step, lodging does not need to be finalized. Enter as much information as is possible for the proposed potential lodging. If you need more space for explanation of a lodging arrangement, please include the information in the Project Design Narrative section above.

- Indicate the organization name of the lodging provider.
- Select the lodging type from the checkbox options.
- Select the lodging category from the checkbox options.
- Indicate the team's anticipated arrival and departure date at the lodging site.
- Indicate the street address, city, state and zip code of the lodging site.
- Please provide the lodging contact name. This person will be the primary contact for anything related to the lodging site.
- List the phone number and email for the lodging contact person. A cell phone number is strongly encouraged.
- Check the "Accessible for people with disabilities?" box if the lodging site can accommodate individuals with mobility, vision, or hearing limitations. Because teams are not assigned to the project when the Project Concept Form is submitted, accommodations may or may not be required. If a member of the assigned AmeriCorps NCCC team has special accessibility requirements, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff will work with you to arrange accommodation if the project has been approved.
- Check this box if beds are provided on site. Providing beds is not required; however, AmeriCorps NCCC requests this information in order to ensure teams are provided with the equipment they will need.
- As long as a full kitchen is available for the team's consistent use, providing food and/or meals is encouraged, but is not required in order to receive a team. Select whether a full kitchen is available on site for the team to use. A full kitchen includes a full-sized refrigerator, a stove and/or oven and a sink large enough to clean dishes. If a full-sized kitchen is not available on site, please provide the closest kitchen facility available in the dialogue box below. If a full kitchen is not available, please indicate whether a microwave and refrigerator of any size is available to the team. Also note if any meals are provided and on which days at site.
- Select whether showers are available on site. Detail the expectations on use of the shower (e.g. cost, scheduling, and location) in the dialog box below. If showers are not available on site, please detail an alternate accommodation.
- Select whether laundry is available on site. If laundry is not available on site, please provide the closest laundry facility available to the team within the dialog box below.
- Select whether showers are available on site. Detail the expectations on use of the shower (e.g. cost, scheduling, and location) in the dialog box below. If showers are not available on site, please detail an alternate accommodation.

## **PROJECT CONCEPT FORM SIGNATURE**

Please review the document for completeness and accuracy, then sign and date the Project Concept Form. The person who signs the document must be the applicant organization's authorized representative who has the authority to commit resources to your organization. An electronic signature is accepted and encouraged.

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete and submit your Project Concept Form to the AmeriCorps NCCC Region Campus associated with the state this project is located. An electronic signature is preferred, but you may also scan and email/fax a hand-signed document. A directory of AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus staff contacts is located at the end of this document on page 24 or on our website (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/ncccsponsor>). Upon review of the Project Concept Form, the AmeriCorps NCCC Regional staff will notify the organization of its status. Please do not complete the full Service Project Application until instructed to do so.