

# AmeriCorps Program Fact Sheet



## Oregon Volunteers AmeriCorps Program



AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages more than 75,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, disaster response, and other areas. In exchange for a year of service, AmeriCorps members earn an education award that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Seventy percent of the programs in our state portfolio work regionally or statewide. Due to the Commissioners' commitment to making an AmeriCorps resource available to every Oregon community, we now have AmeriCorps members serving in 30 Oregon counties.

In 2010, 835 full and part-time AmeriCorps members of all ages and backgrounds served Oregon communities through local nonprofits, schools, religious organizations and other groups. They tutored children, coordinated volunteer programs, created and instituted after-school programs, assisted high school students in accessing post-secondary education opportunities, conducted disaster preparedness education, removed non-native species, performed trail and stream bank restorations and met a variety of other health, human service, and community-identified needs.

## Commission's AmeriCorps Program Goal

High-quality AmeriCorps programs continue to help meet local needs identified by communities.

## Our AmeriCorps Projects

### Grant Management

Each year, Commissioners establish a framework under which organizations wishing to sponsor an AmeriCorps program can apply for three-year funding (with continuation dependent on adequate performance). Through a strong peer review process, final decisions are recommended by the AmeriCorps Program Committee and finalized by the entire Commission. Following selection of program sponsors, commission staff provides support, technical assistance, and program and financial monitoring to insure members and service recipients receive the highest quality experience from their service.

### AmeriCorps Member Training

Oregon AmeriCorps members unite three times each program year for training coordinated by Oregon Volunteers.

**Northwest Service Symposium:** A juried competition for the literary, visual and performing arts. Projects reflect the service experience and demonstrate artistic merit and/or enthusiasm. More than 200 national service participants share and reflect upon their experience during a banquet honoring top projects, gallery opening featuring symposium artwork, performance showcase, and breakout sessions. Submissions are then compiled and published in a book providing first-time published works for many entrants.

**AmeriCorps Kick-Off:** 1-4 day training on skill development held each fall. Sessions complement training provided by program sponsors and focus on topics of interest to all AmeriCorps members, regardless of the discipline they are engaged in during service. Members can also participate in Volunteer Management for AmeriCorps Members and/or Leadership Skills for AmeriCorps Members courses.

**Life After AmeriCorps:** An event occurring in June for all Oregon AmeriCorps members focused on post-service opportunities, resume development and strategies for using the Education Award. Oftentimes, AmeriCorps Alumni are engaged in this training to share their experiences after their year(s) of service.

### AmeriCorps Program Staff Training

AmeriCorps program staff are responsible for both administration of their grants and the quality of experience for each AmeriCorps member in their program. Providing each staff member at an Oregon AmeriCorps program with the tools and skills necessary to ensure program success is an important part of our work. We deliver these tools in three formats.

**Quarterly AmeriCorps Program Director Meetings:** support to program staff in day-to-day operations, including interpretation of regulations, dissemination of federal information, dissemination of best practices and training on topics identified by programs.

**Network Northwest Conference:** annual training opportunity for AmeriCorps Program staff from Oregon and Washington. Using results from our annual training needs assessment, we create a 2-3 day event focusing on expressed areas of interest and concern. The collaborative, two-state partnership enables us to host national and regional leaders in the fields of service and volunteerism.

**Program Management Listserv:** an ongoing opportunity for two-way communication between commission staff and field staff used to distribute information in a timely, efficient manner.

### Support to AmeriCorps Members with Disabilities

Ensuring all Oregonians able to serve have the opportunity to participate in AmeriCorps is a support function we provide AmeriCorps programs via training, technical assistance, referrals and assistance with the purchase of special accommodation tools and equipment.

### Promotion - AmeriCorps Recruitment

Recruiting 835 or more individuals who wish to perform service each year in Oregon through AmeriCorps is challenging. While most programs have individual outreach plans, there are areas where coordination and support are vital to eliminate duplication of efforts.

**Speakers' Bureau:** composed of Oregon AmeriCorps Alumni to serve as a vehicle for reaching high school and college students. Additionally, arrangements are made for AmeriCorps recruitment to occur at campus career fairs and other similar events.

**Special Attention and Designated Funds:** available to programs to develop outreach materials aimed at recruiting Oregonians with disabilities to serve as AmeriCorps members.