

# Guide to Member Benefits

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AmeriCorps Members receive a wealth of benefits, including the satisfaction gained from the experience of serving and knowing that they are making a difference in the lives of others. As a result of the AmeriCorps experience, professional development takes shape and Members often gain experience leading to careers either in their chosen field or it may lead to a change in planned career paths. To maximize the AmeriCorps experience, Members are provided an incentive for financial, educational, and health assistance during their term of service; under certain conditions. These benefits help them to maintain a standard of living while continuing to make an impact in the community. AmeriCorps Members may receive the following benefits:

- ▶ Living Allowance
- ▶ Education Award
- ▶ Loan Forbearance
- ▶ Healthcare Coverage
- ▶ Child Care Benefits

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## ***I. Living Allowance***

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### **Q:** *How do I Distribute the Living Allowance?*

The living allowance is not a salary or a wage. Member living allowances should not vary from one pay period to the other unless the Member's status has changed (i.e. full-time; halftime; quarter-time; minimum-time). *"The living allowance is designed to help Members meet the necessary living expenses incurred while participating in the AmeriCorps Program. Programs must not pay a living allowance on an hourly basis. It is not a wage and should not fluctuate based on the number of hours Members serve in a*

*given time period. Programs should pay the living allowance in increments, such as weekly or bi-weekly.”*<sup>1</sup> When reimbursement requests show fluctuations in Member living allowances, this is a red flag. You **will** be contacted by your program officer before the request is processed unless an explanation is provided with the request.

If the Member serves any portion of a pay period, then the Member **must** receive the living allowance for that entire period unless the AmeriCorps program has some specific safeguard guidelines in place. If the program has specific policies in place, these rules, policies, and/or regulations must be a part of the Member Service Contract in the form of an addendum. The contract should specify how the living allowance is distributed (ex., bi-weekly, semimonthly). It should also stipulate that Members will receive the living allowance as long as they are serving. Otherwise, payments must cease when the Member's service ceases.

**Q:** *[What Happens When a Member Starts Service Late?](#)*

It is imperative to protect the operations of the program by establishing written policies to cover situations where Members exit early and serve for less than the agreed upon term of service. It is a best practice to also include the language in the Member Service Contract as an addendum. If a Member starts service within the first two weeks of the month, you might set policy that gives them the entire living allowance. If the Member starts service beyond the first two weeks of the month, you have the option to prorate the amount based on the number of days in the month he/she will serve. If the Member begins the program late, the AmeriCorps Program may not pay “catch up” amounts to the Member so that the Member ends his/her service at the same time as others.

Members who begin service late or complete hours early **may not receive** the full living allowance in that time period. For example, if a Member begins an 11 month program a month late, the Member will receive 10/11<sup>th</sup> of the total living allowance. The only exception would be if the Member served an additional month longer than the Members who started on time. The program design must appropriately support the extension of service by written policy.

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<sup>1</sup> AmeriCorps Living Allowances Distributions (Handout 1) – 2012 Financial and Grants Management Institute

**Q:** *What Happens When a Member Leaves Service Early?*

The same holds true for the end of service. If the Member leaves within the first two weeks of the month, his/her living allowance could be based on the number of days in the month he/she served. If the Member serves over the two-week cut-off, it is acceptable to provide him/her with the full living allowance. You can establish different cut-off points as long as they are reasonable, documented in policy, and followed consistently.”<sup>2</sup> It is strongly recommended that your in-house human relations department or legal advisor review such policies to ensure that you are not violating any laws or internal procedures.

**Q:** *Can a Member Receive a Lump Sum Payment?*

AmeriCorps Programs **cannot** provide the full living allowance to a Member simply because the Member completed their number of service hours before the end of the agreed-upon term of service. Thus, if a Member completes 1700 hours in nine months, but the program runs for 11 months, the AmeriCorps Program may not pay the remaining two months of the living allowance in a lump sum payment.

The intent of the AmeriCorps living allowance is to help Members meet necessary living expenses incurred while participating in the AmeriCorps program. Members who complete service in an abbreviated time period may be depriving the service site(s) of important service needed to produce the expected impact in the community it is serving.

**Example:** Program has a 12-month program with a yearly living allowance of \$12,630. It is paid on a monthly basis of \$1,052.50.

| <b>Member Situation</b>                                                                  | <b>Length of Service</b> | <b>Amount Per Month</b> | <b>Total Living Allowance Provided</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Member A starts and finishes on time                                                     | 12 months                | \$1,052.50              | \$12,630.00                            |
| Member B starts on time and finishes one month early                                     | 11 months                | \$1,052.50              | \$11,577.50                            |
| Member C starts two months late and finishes two months later with an approved extension | 12 months                | \$1,052.50              | \$12,630.00                            |
| Member D starts one month late and finishes on time                                      | 11 months                | \$1,052.50              | \$11,577.50                            |

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<sup>2</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** *Can a Member Receive a Living Allowance While Not Serving?*

**A Member who serves zero hours in a pay period is ineligible to receive a living allowance for that period.** Members are to be suspended if an issue prevents the Member from serving. Members may not receive living allowances during terms of suspension nor does the period of suspension count toward a Member's required service hours. An addendum should be attached to the Member's Service Contract outlining circumstances when the Member is unable to serve. Again, the agreement may also stipulate the minimum number of hours that can be served to receive a full living allowance.

**Table 1.** Below are the FY 2020-2021 living allowance amounts as determined by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The living allowance is considered taxable for FICA and income tax.

| Service Term      | Minimum # of Required Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Living Allowance |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full-Time         | 1,700                       | \$14,279                 | \$28,558                 |
| Reduced Full-Time | 1,200                       | N/A                      | \$20,159                 |
| Half-Time         | 900                         | N/A                      | \$15,119                 |
| Reduced Half-Time | 675                         | N/A                      | \$11,339                 |
| Quarter-Time      | 450                         | N/A                      | \$7,559                  |
| Minimum-Time      | 300                         | N/A                      | \$5,040                  |

**Q:** *Can a Member Waive His/Her Living Allowance?*

A Member may waive all or a portion of the living allowance if he/she believes his/her public assistance may be calculated as income and will be lost or reduced due to receiving the living allowance. Even if a Member waives his/her right to receive the living allowance, it is possible (depending on the regulations of the public assistance program) that the living allowance amount that the Member is eligible to receive will still be considered in the eligibility of receiving the public assistance.

A Member who has waived the living allowance may revoke the waiver at any time and may begin receiving the living allowance going forward from the date the individual revoked the waiver. It is not permissible to "refund" any portion of the living allowance for the period of time the living allowance was waived.

**Q: *Can Programs Impose a Financial Penalty on Members?***

Members cannot be penalized from the federal portion of their living allowance for disciplinary reasons (ex., showing up late or for missing days). However, if the Member receives a portion of the living allowance from other non-federal sources, and a penalty system is put in place, fines can be collected from the Member. It is crucial and required that this process is written in policies and procedures and/or included as an addendum to the Member Service Contract.

**Q: *How Are Fines Collected?***

If determined to be necessary for improvements in Member performance or attendance, the AmeriCorps Program may impose a reasonable fine on Members for minor disciplinary problems that are consistent with the Member Service Agreement. Fines may not be calculated on an hourly basis. For example, a Member who is an hour late may not be fined an hour's worth of living allowance. Before deducting a portion of the Member's living allowance, the Program should consider 1) how this might impact the status of the Member under employment laws, including minimum wage and unemployment compensation; and 2) that a Program may be required to provide additional matching funds.

**Q: *Can Programs Temporarily Withhold a Member's Living Allowance?***

A program may temporarily withhold a Member's living allowance for minor disciplinary actions such as failing to submit timesheets, chronic tardiness and other offenses as outlined in the Member Service Contract. The Member Service Contract must clearly state the policy, and the withholding must be temporary, and not result in the Program docking the Member's living allowance.

**Q: *Is it Allowable to Garnish a Member's Living Allowance?***

Any type of garnishment of the federal portion of a Member's living allowance is not permitted due to issues of sovereign immunity. Sovereign immunity protects the property interests of the United States from suits to which it has been consented. The federal government has a continuing property interest in AmeriCorps grant funds until they are expended in accordance with the grant's terms. With respect to the living allowance, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has a property interest in the federal share of the Member's living allowance, until the AmeriCorps Member actually

receives, and this property interest is protected by sovereign immunity. Only Congress may waive this immunity. Whether or not the non-federal portion of the living allowance is subject to garnishment is a state law issue. Because the CNCS is not a party to this action, and because it involves application of state law, programs should consult with their own local counsel. *Reference 42U.S.C.§12594.*<sup>3</sup>

### **Taxes and Insurance Related to the Living Allowance (45 CFR§2522.240 & §2522.250)**<sup>4</sup>

- ➔ **Liability Insurance Coverage.** The sub-grantee is responsible for ensuring adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees and Members, including coverage of Members engaged in on- and off-site project activities.
  
- ➔ **FICA (Social Security and Medicare Taxes).** Unless the sub-grantee obtains a ruling from the Social Security Administration or the Internal Revenue Service that specifically exempts its AmeriCorps Members from FICA requirements, the sub-grantee must pay FICA for any Member receiving a living allowance. The sub-grantee must withhold 7.65% from the Member's living allowance.
  
- ➔ **Income Taxes.** The sub-grantee must withhold Federal personal income taxes from the Member living allowance, requiring each Member to complete a W-4 form at the beginning of the term of service and providing a W-2 form at the close of the tax year. The sub-grantee must also comply with any applicable state or local tax requirements.
  
- ➔ **Worker's Compensation.** Some Missouri employers may be required to insure their workers' compensation obligations for AmeriCorps Members. Sub-grantees may consult the Missouri Workers' Compensation Law, Section 287.010, *et seq.*, RSMo or contact the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Workers' Compensation Division at 800-775-2667 to determine worker's compensation requirements. If worker's compensation insurance is not required,

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<sup>3</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions  
2020 Terms and Conditions-Specific: Living Allowances, Other In-Service Benefits, and Taxes

<sup>4</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions  
2020 Terms and Conditions Specific: Living Allowances, Other In-Service Benefits, and Taxes

sub-grantees must obtain Occupational, Accidental, and Death and Dismemberment coverage for Members to cover in-service injury or incidents.

- ➔ **Unemployment Insurance.** The U.S. Department of Labor ruled on April 20, 1995, that federal unemployment compensation law **does not** require coverage for Members because no 'employer-employee' relationship exists. The sub-grantee may not charge the cost of unemployment insurance taxes to the grant unless mandated by law.
  
- ➔ **Family and Medical Leave.** CNCS's Regulations at *45 CFR§2540.220* describe the circumstances under which AmeriCorps Members can take family and medical leave in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). However, family and medical leave does not count toward the requisite service hours and Members *may not receive a living allowance during this period*. At the discretion of the sub-grantee, temporary leave may also be authorized for the reasons allowed under the FMLA to AmeriCorps Members who do not otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for FMLA leave as described in the regulations. If temporary leave is appropriate, sub-grantees have the flexibility to determine the duration of the absence for up to 12 weeks and may choose to continue providing health benefits to the Member during the period of absence.

The length of the leave must be based on two considerations:

- The circumstances of the situation; and
  
  - The impact of the absence on the Member's service experience and on the overall program. If the disruption would seriously compromise the Member's service experience or the quality of the program as a whole, then the sub-grantee may offer the Member the option of rejoining the program in the next class or completely withdrawing from the program.
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- ➔ **Federal Work Study.** Upon approval by the CNCS Program Office, sub-grantees may enroll Federal Work Study students as AmeriCorps Members. CNCS does not consider a wage under the Federal Work Study program to be a living allowance

for purposes of the National and Community Service Act. The sub-grantee is not required to report such wages in the AmeriCorps grant.

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## ***II. ELI SEGAL EDUCATION AWARD***

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“Segal AmeriCorps Education Award was named after Eli Segal, one of the pioneers of the national service movement and the first CEO of CNCS. Upon successful completion of a term of service, Members are eligible to receive the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay college costs or to repay student loans. The award is a post-service benefit provided to AmeriCorps State and National Members, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) Members, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) Members.

*Note: Under certain circumstances, the Member may use the education award to study outside the U.S. For information, have the student contact the **National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677.***

Since the inception of AmeriCorps in 1994, over 1 million alumni have earned more than \$3.3 billion in education awards. The award was designed to encourage AmeriCorps alumni to seek post-secondary education opportunities and serve as a powerful recruitment tool for individuals to join AmeriCorps. Studies show that AmeriCorps alumni, with their commitment to service, also make excellent students. In order to encourage AmeriCorps alumni to enroll in their education programs, higher education institutions are “matching” the education award with scholarships and/or academic credits.

To find a list of schools that match the Eli Segal Education Award, access the following link:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/segal-amicorps-educationaward/matching-institutions>.

If an educational institution expresses an interest in matching the education award, they can access the following link: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/node/13276> or they can contact [EdAwardMatch@cns.gov](mailto:EdAwardMatch@cns.gov). If an educational institution decides to participate in the Education Award Matching Program, instructions on how to do so can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/segal-amicorps-education-award/ed-award-matching-program>.



## Amount

The dollar amount of a full-time award is tied to the maximum amount of the U.S. Department of Education's Pell Grant. However, it can vary from year to year. Due to the AmeriCorps State and National programs being funded on a different schedule than VISTA and NCCC, VISTA and NCCC Members will be eligible for the new amount sooner than AmeriCorps State and National Members.

The maximum amount of the Pell grant for the 2020-21 fiscal year is \$6,195. Since the maximum amount of the Pell Grant can change every year, the amount of a full-time award can change as well. However, once a Member earns an award, the dollar value of that award will not increase. It is fixed. For all programs, award amounts for part-time terms of service vary based upon the length of the required term of service. Payments made from Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards are considered taxable income in the year that the Corporation submits the payment to the school or loan holder.

**Table 2.** Segal Education Award Amounts (amounts listed reflect the correct amount as of October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020; these amounts are subject to change each year as it is based on the maximum value of the Pell Grant)

| <b>SEGAL EDUCATION AWARD AMOUNTS</b>     |                           |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Participation Type</b>                | <b>Minimum # of Hours</b> | <b>Amount</b> |
| <b>Full-Time</b>                         | 1,700                     | \$6,195.00    |
| <b>Three Quarters-Time</b>               | 1,200                     | \$4,336.50    |
| <b>Half-Time</b>                         | 900                       | \$3,097.50    |
| <b>Reduced Half-Time</b>                 | 675                       | \$2,360.00    |
| <b>Quarter-Time</b>                      | 450                       | \$1,638.89    |
| <b>Minimal-Time and Summer Associate</b> | 300                       | \$1,311.11    |
| <b>AmeriCorps Affiliate</b>              | 100                       | \$348.64      |

## Eligibility to Receive an Award

The Member is eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award if he/she successfully completes a term of service in accordance with the Member Service Contract. A Member serving in a full-time term of service is required to complete the service within 12 months but not less than 9 months.

A high school diploma or its equivalent is no longer required in order to receive an Education Award. This was a statutory change made in 2009. Regulation 45 C.F.R. 2526.10(b) is no longer valid and will be removed from the CFR. A Member still must have completed a term of service certified by the Program before an award is available for use. Refer to 42 U.S.C. §12602(a).<sup>5</sup>

### **Limitations**

There is a limit on the value of education awards that an individual is allowed to receive. By law, an individual may not receive more than the aggregate (or total) value of two full time education awards.

Full-time, three quarters time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter time, and minimum time terms of service each count as one term of service. Generally, if a Member is released for cause before completing the term of service and is not eligible to receive an education award, that term of service still counts towards the maximum number of terms as well. If you max out the number of terms you serve with one stream of service, you can start a new term with another AmeriCorps program and receive additional awards; as long as you have not yet reached the full value of two full-time awards. You can also serve terms (and elect not to receive an award) up to the limits shown below. This applies even if the Member serves up to four (4) terms of service in an AmeriCorps State and National program. The maximum number of terms a Member may serve in each National Service program is as follows:

| <b>Term of Service</b> | <b>Conditions</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>National Service Program</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>4</b>               | Serving at least 1 service hour is equivalent to one term                                                                                                                                 | AmeriCorps State and National   |
| <b>5</b>               | One-year terms                                                                                                                                                                            | VISTA                           |
| <b>2</b>               | No limit on the number of total terms for NCCC programs, but Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms without a break in service of at least 10 months before serving again. | NCCC                            |

<sup>5</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions

## Payments

**Members have seven (7) years to use their education award from the date of the completion of their AmeriCorps service.** You can divide up your award and use portions of it at different times, as long as it is for authorized expenditures within the specified time period. It is also allowable to apply a portion of the award to existing qualified student loans, and save the remainder to pay for authorized college costs a few years in the future.

The National Service Trust cannot make payments to anyone other than qualified schools and loan holders. Direct the Member to the financial aid counselor for information on how the school handles disbursements and reimbursements.<sup>6</sup>

If the Member withdraws from the school where the education award was applied and, there is any portion (or all) of the award funds that were not used, the school may be required to refund that amount back to the Trust. The refund is then credited to the Member's education award "account" and is still subject to the award's original expiration date (seven years from the date the award was earned).

For more information on how to use the Segal Education Award, go to:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/segal-ameri-corps-education-award>.

## Transfers

Under certain conditions, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act allows for the transfer of the Segal Education Award to specific family members.

### **Q:** *Who is eligible to transfer an award?*

- The recipient of the award must have been at least 55 years of age in an AmeriCorps State or National Program before he/she began the term of service.
- The recipient of the award must have begun the term of service on or after October 1, 2009.

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<sup>6</sup> The National Service Trust (frequently referred to as the Trust) is a fund established by the National and Community Service Act of 1993. It is used to pay for AmeriCorps Educational Awards and interest that accrues on qualified student loans for those who have successfully completed approved terms of national service. The money is kept in an account in the U.S. Treasury and is invested in Treasury securities.

- ☑ Complete the required forms- either on-line or paper forms to authorize the transfer, which includes providing information and certifying eligibility to make the transfer.
- ☑ Make the transfer before the awards' seven-year expiration date.

**Q:** *Who is eligible to receive an award?*

- ☑ The child, stepchild, foster child, grandchild, or step-grandchild of the individual who earned the award and is eligible to transfer the award.
- ☑ A U.S. citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien.
- ☑ Recipient cannot have earned or received the aggregate value of two (2) full-time education awards.
- ☑ Recipients of an award must be registered in the –on-line system ‘*My AmeriCorps Portal*’ in order to complete the transfer process and access the award.
- ☑ The recipient must have an e-mail address to register to use My AmeriCorps. The recipient can accept the full amount that is transferred, a portion of that amount, or decline the transfer.

**Other Stipulations to Transfer an Award**

1. The recipient of the transferred award must use it within 10 years of the date the Member (the person who transferred the award) completed his/her term of service upon which the award is based. **An extension of the period of use will not be granted solely because the recipient was not old enough to enroll in an institution of higher education or to incur qualified student loans within that 10-year period.**
2. Each transferred award can only be transferred one time and to only one recipient. Multiple transfers are not allowed under any circumstance. An award cannot be split between two or more recipients.
3. Transferred education awards cannot be used to pay current educational expenses for GI-Bill approved educational courses/programs unless the courses or programs are offered by Title IV Schools.
4. Members transferring awards to their stepchild or step-grandchild will be required to complete an additional form called *Education Award Transfer Request and Authorization*. This form is used to verify the “step” relationship.

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### ***III. Loan Forbearance***

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Members who are serving in an approved AmeriCorps position may be eligible to temporarily postpone the repayment of their ***qualified federal student loans*** through an action called loan forbearance. Forbearance means (for an AmeriCorps Member) that he/she does not make payments or pay interest on his/her student loan while serving. If the Member successfully completes his/her term of service, the National Service Trust may pay all or a portion of the interest that accrued during the Member's service period. **Private loans do not qualify.**

Forbearance applies to most federal loans ***except***:

1. National Service forbearance does not apply to Parent PLUS loans. These are federal loans taken out in a parent's name to pay for a child's education. If you have Parent PLUS loans, you can neither put them into forbearance nor pay them down with your education award.
2. Federal Perkins loans are also not eligible for national service forbearance. (Many educational institutions will use their discretion to grant forbearance for Perkins loans.)

The Member can request approval for the forbearance of the loan from his/her loan holder. This should be completed during the Member's service period. The Member may request the forbearance on-line through the "*My AmeriCorps Portal*". After completing the term of service, he/she will be responsible for repaying the loan according to the terms of the loan. If the loan is in default, the Member may not be eligible for forbearance. However, if the Member has loans that were in default prior to beginning his/her national service, he/she can attempt to negotiate an arrangement with the loan holder or collection agency to bring the loan out of default so that forbearance can be granted and interest can be paid.

**Q: Is Forbearance Available to Members Without an Education Award?**

Yes! Members who have received the value of two (2) full-time education awards are eligible for forbearance during their service period. They are also eligible to have all or a portion of the interest paid that accrued during their service. However, if the Member does not successfully complete his/her term of service, it renders that Member ineligible.

**Taxes**

The Segal Education Award is subject to federal tax in the year each payment is made. Regardless of whether it is used for current educational expenses or to repay a qualified student loan, it is considered taxable income. It is important to note that the amount of the education award a Member uses, as well as any interest payments made on his/her behalf, may have an impact on the Member's overall income tax responsibility. The **Trust does not** withhold taxes from the education award or interest payments.

**Interest Payments**

*Interest payments* are payments that are made on the behalf of the Member for the interest that accrued on his/her qualified student loans while serving in AmeriCorps. These payments are made in addition to his/her education award and are not taken from his/her education award balance. Interest paid on qualified student loans is also subject to income taxes in the year the payment is made to the loan holder.

**Brief Breakdown of Tax Implications**

- If the Member uses the entire amount of the education award in one calendar year, he/she must include the entire amount as income on his/her taxes for that year.
- If a portion of the award is redeemed in a calendar year, the Member is responsible for any taxes owed on that portion only.
- If the Member does not use any portion of the award in a particular year, no portion is included as income.

If the education award or interest payments total more than \$600 in a calendar year, in January of the following year, CNCS will send the Member an IRS Form 1099 to be used for income tax return. Amounts from both will be listed together on the 1099 form.

## Tax Relief

Although Members are responsible for taxes on the education award and other AmeriCorps benefits, they may be eligible for other tax relief through the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. For more information, contact a tax professional or the Internal Revenue Service for details. You can also access the following link which explains tax benefits that may be available to tax payers who are paying for their higher educational expenses or repaying student loans: <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p970/index.html>.<sup>7</sup>

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## ***IV. Healthcare Coverage***

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Beginning in 2014, options for affordable health insurance for Members was outlined by the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). AmeriCorps programs are required to provide healthcare plans that are in adherence to the requirements of the ACA.

Sub-grantees must provide or make available a basic health insurance plan to AmeriCorps Members serving a 1700-hour full-time term. This must be offered at the time of the Members' acceptance into the program; IF the Member is not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the Member begins his/her term of service. Programs are also responsible for making healthcare insurance available to Members who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own.

Less-than-full-time Members serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time are eligible for healthcare benefits as well. However, programs are not required to make this option available to these Members or those less-than-full time Members serving in a fulltime capacity when his/her regular term of service involves performing service on a normal full-time schedule for a period of 6 weeks or more.

Health care benefits are for AmeriCorps Members only. CNCS will not cover healthcare costs for dependents, spouses, or other relatives.

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<sup>7</sup> IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education

## Options for Members Coverage

The following options are available to Members to be covered by a health insurance plan:

- Stay on his/her parents' or spouse's plan.
- Obtain insurance through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace of at least the Bronze level plan.
- Obtain insurance through a private insurance broker (other than what is offered by the program which will be at the Member's expense).
- Medicaid (based on eligibility if not already receiving).<sup>8</sup>
- Medicare (based on eligibility if not already receiving).<sup>9</sup>
- Military benefits.

*Note: Full-time Members are entitled to health insurance coverage even if they are on Medicaid or Medicare. Medicaid and Medicare coverage are considered wrap around coverage, which means that they will pick up any costs that the health insurance policy provided by the Member's AmeriCorps program does not cover.*

As stated previously, if during the term of service, a Member loses coverage through no deliberate act of their own, such as parental or spousal job loss, the program must provide the Member with a basic health insurance plan that meets the minimum requirements listed above.

You can shop for plans in the Health Insurance Marketplaces at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) where you may be eligible for financial assistance. Also, for additional clarification on AmeriCorps and healthcare coverage, access the following link at:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/current-members/health-care-options>

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## ***V. CHILDCARE BENEFITS***

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The AmeriCorps Child Care Benefits Program is available to qualified, active, full-time Members who need the benefit to successfully serve and complete their term of service. Childcare benefits can only be paid directly to qualified childcare providers for all or part of the Member's child care costs during their term of service. Benefits may not exceed

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<sup>8</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions

<sup>9</sup> AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions



applicable payment rates as established in the state in which the childcare is provided under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990. (42 U.S.C. 9858c(4)(A)).

To qualify for the AmeriCorps Child Care Benefit Program, the Member must meet the following eligibility requirements:<sup>10</sup>

1. Household income must not exceed **75% of the state's median income for a family of the same size**. This limit is different for each state and may change annually. The total household income is used to determine your income eligibility excluding your AmeriCorps State & National living allowance.
2. Must not currently receive a childcare subsidy from another source at the time of acceptance into the program (including a parent or guardian) which would continue to be provided while the Member serves in the program.
3. Must be the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 13.
4. Child must reside with the Member.
5. Must certify that he/she needs child care in order to participate in the AmeriCorps State and National program.

### **AmeriCorps Child Care Benefits Administration**

GAP Solutions, Inc. (GAPSI) administers the AmeriCorps Child Care Benefits Program for CNCS. Therefore, Members must apply directly to GAPSI for the childcare benefit. Members may apply on-line or by submitting a hard copy application. For further information on the application process, access GAPSI's website at: [www.americorpschildcare.com](http://www.americorpschildcare.com) or call toll free at (855) 886-0687.

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from the CNCS website - <http://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/main-menu/2013/ameri-corps-childcare-eligibility-overview>