



## TerraCorps

### 2019-2020 Service Site Application Packet

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TerraCorps invites land conservation, urban agriculture, food justice, and nonprofit organizations with similar missions to apply as service sites for our upcoming service year (August 26, 2019-July 24, 2020). TerraCorps supports up to 48 AmeriCorps members, each completing 1,700 hours of service over an 11-month term. TerraCorps members can serve in one of five positions depending on your organization's needs: Regional Collaboration Coordinator, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator, Youth Education Coordinator, or Urban Agriculture Coordinator.

Service Site Application Forms are at [terracorps.org/become-a-service-site/](http://terracorps.org/become-a-service-site/). Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all spots are filled. We will begin member recruitment in early-April. The TerraCorps program is contingent on federal funding, to be confirmed in June/July 2019.

Please review the information in this packet. For more info, contact:

Hanna Mogensen  
TerraCorps Chief Program Officer  
116 John Street, STE 405  
Lowell, MA 01852  
[hmogensen@terracorps.org](mailto:hmogensen@terracorps.org)

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#### 1) AmeriCorps, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, and TerraCorps Funding

AmeriCorps is a national service program initiated by President Clinton in 1993. Yearly, AmeriCorps ([americorps.gov](http://americorps.gov)) engages 88,000 members in service opportunities with nonprofit organizations, schools, and local agencies to help communities meet critical education, public safety, human, or environmental needs.

During a service year, nearly 2,000 AmeriCorps members serve programs in Massachusetts. Funding is provided through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA), a private, nonprofit that serves as the state commission on community service and volunteerism, administers CNCS funding to ~23 AmeriCorps programs in MA and monitors and evaluates the implementation of these programs. For more about MSA, visit [mass-service.org](http://mass-service.org).

TerraCorps requests grant funding from CNCS that we expect will cover 55% of the total cost to run the TerraCorps program in the 2019-2020 program service year. TerraCorps secures funding for the remaining 45% costs through the program administrative fees paid by service sites for each member they host and through diversified fundraising from individuals, foundations, corporations, and alumni.

TerraCorps' total cost per AmeriCorps member in the 2019-2020 program service year is \$30,328. For each full-time AmeriCorps member that a service site hosts, the site pays a program administrative fee on a sliding scale based on the size of its annual operating budget. For local or regional organizations fees range from \$8,250 - \$9,250. For statewide, national, or international organizations, there is a flat fee of \$10,000 per full-time AmeriCorps member. The percentage of the total cost per AmeriCorps member paid by service sites ranges from 27-33%. Please see chart below.

Organization Type	Operating Budget	TerraCorps Admin Fee per Member	Percent Total Cost per Member
Local/regional	<\$500,000	\$8,250	27%
Local/regional	\$500,000-\$1,000,000	\$8,750	29%
Local/regional	>\$1,000,000	\$9,250	30%
Statewide/National/International	Flat Fee	\$10,000	33%

For local and regional organizations: To further support the accessibility of the TerraCorps program, local and regional organizations may also take advantage of a 5% early payment discount if they pay the administrative fee for each member prior to the program start date. To receive this discount, checks must be postmarked by August 26, 2019. If you are not able to pay in full and would like to set up a payment plan, please contact us. For all payments, we offer a 15-day grace period following payment due dates. If payment is received more than 15 days after the set payment due date, outstanding balance is subject to a 1.5% late payment fee for each 30-day period thereafter. See the chart below as an example of how fees will be applied. (Note: example based on an admin fee of \$8,750)

Payment Submitted	Balance Owed	Notes
Before: 8/26/2019	\$8,312.5	Admin fee with 5% discount if paid before program start date
8/26/2019-9/9/2019	\$8,750	Standard admin fee if paid during 15-day grace period
9/10/2019-10/9/2019	\$8,881.25	Admin fee + 1.5% late payment fee
10/10/2019-11/8/2019	\$9,014.47	Outstanding balance + 1.5% late payment fee

**Payment periods above will remain constant. Actual balance owed will be dependent on your organization's established admin fee.**

Organizations that have outstanding fees from prior program years will be ineligible to host members until all outstanding amounts are paid. In addition to the admin fee, service sites are responsible for approximately \$1,500 in expenses to support each member's travel, training, and supplies (not including a computer) needed to carry out their service activities.

## **2) TerraCorps Program History and Service Sites**

In 2008, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (Mount Grace), a regional land trust based in Athol, MA, started a pilot program with five Commonwealth Corps members. Mount Grace successfully scaled the program, Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT-AmeriCorps) to support 20 nonprofit partners with 36 AmeriCorps members by 2016. In 2017 MassLIFT began the process of spinning-off from Mount Grace to become its own nonprofit organization, TerraCorps, Inc. In 2018, TerraCorps became its own independent nonprofit organization and moved to Lowell, MA.

**Current 2018-2019 Service Site Partners include:** A full list of current TerraCorps Service Site Partners is available on our website at <https://terracorps.org/service-sites/>.

## **3) TerraCorps Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change**

At TerraCorps we're working to help communities gain access to and conserve land for the health and well-being of people and nature. Using the AmeriCorps national service model, TerraCorps prepares and mobilizes emerging leaders to help strengthen the community-based non-profits working to meet these goals. We seek to create change by achieving a broader, more authentic engagement of the diverse peoples living in our communities. When we are successful, we believe resources will grow; land conservation will accelerate; land access will increase; land stewardship will improve; and land equity will accrue to the benefit of whole communities and ecosystems.

Our vision is that land is the foundation of health and well-being for **ALL** people in **EVERY** community.

## **4) Member Positions and Service Activities**

TerraCorps members serve in one of five positions: Regional Collaboration Coordinator, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator, Youth Education Coordinator, or Urban Agriculture Coordinator.

As described in Appendix A, all members carry out capacity building projects; educate or train individuals; recruit, train, manage, and support community volunteers; and identify new individuals and groups to participate in education, recreation, or service opportunities that address land conservation or land access needs. The specific goals and responsibilities of members in each position differ as described below.

**Regional Collaboration Coordinators (RCC)** build the long-term capacity of their service sites by assessing community needs related to land conservation and land access and then organizing collaborative community projects to meet these needs. They collaborate with community groups including: all-volunteer local land trusts, planning agencies, academic institutions, government agencies, neighborhood groups,

human service organizations to build networks and organize cross-sector working groups to meet community needs. RCCs may assist their service site and partner organizations by developing Municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans, completing farmland and food systems mapping, securing and protecting land for use as community parks, planning recreational greenways, developing farm-to-institution and buy local food campaigns, and organizing trainings and outreach. By educating landowners, farmers, and community groups and organizing multi-stakeholder projects that increase access to funding, RCCs empower diverse people to create healthy, vibrant communities.

**Land Stewardship Coordinators (LSC)** build the long-term capacity of their service sites by creating networks of volunteers to support hands-on stewardship of community lands. They organize, train, and collaborate with municipal boards, neighborhood and civic associations, community members, youth groups, and schools to care for, improve access to, and support the long-term resiliency and sustainable use of community lands. LSCs may assist their service site by: surveying and monitoring conservation land, building and maintaining recreational trails, monitoring and maintaining farmland, restoring wildlife habitat, mitigating erosion, and improving public access to open spaces. By providing training and organizing collaborative land-focused projects, they increase resources for community projects, demonstrate environmentally responsible land management, help individuals build skills, and nurture an inclusive sense of public ownership in the local landscape. LSCs spend roughly 60% of their time in the office and 40% in the field.

**Community Engagement Coordinators (CEC)** build the long-term capacity of their service sites by developing culturally inclusive systems, programming, partnerships, and events. By collaborating with community groups, CECs demonstrate how the sustainable use and conservation of land can help address community needs related to education, public health, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, homelessness, poverty, hunger, and cultural decline. CECs build connections between land and people that increase public support for land access, revitalization, and conservation initiatives. CECs may partner with human services organizations to build community gardens, hospitals to create wellness gardens, neighborhood groups to revitalize urban parks, farmers markets to increase access to locally grown food, disability groups to create wheelchair accessible events, public health programs to support recovery, and any underrepresented community groups who want to provide access to the outdoors. By engaging with diverse peoples and collaborating with community partners, CECs build bridges that reinforce the connection between land and a sustainable social, economic, and environmental future for all people.

**Youth Education Coordinators (YEC)** build the long-term capacity of their service site by engaging youth in service learning, experiential education, and inquiry-based science and nature learning projects. They collaborate with schools, libraries, and youth groups on projects that connect young people to the natural world, improve science literacy, and encourage healthy lifestyles. YECs may help their service site to engage with educators and volunteers to guide youth in environmental inquiry and discovery, school and community garden projects, urban tree stewardship projects, urban pocket park projects, and “green jobs” training and internship programs. By serving with youth in an outdoor learning environment, they reinforce the connection between people, nature, and community and foster an inclusive land stewardship ethic in future generations.

**Urban Agriculture Coordinators (UAC)** build the long-term capacity of their service sites by creating networks of volunteers to support hands-on stewardship of community lands. They organize, train, and collaborate with municipal boards, neighborhood and civic associations, community members, youth groups, and schools to care for, improve access to, and support the long-term resiliency and sustainable use of community lands. UACs may assist their service site by creating raised beds or community gardens, monitoring and maintaining urban farmland, helping to established sustainable food systems, providing new farmer trainings, offering

community workshops on topics such as: soil health, crop storage, cover crops, etc. By providing training and organizing collaborative land-focused projects, they increase resources for communities, demonstrate responsible land management, help individuals build skills, and nurture an inclusive sense of public ownership in the local landscape. UACs spend roughly 60% of their time in the office and 40% in the field.

All TerraCorps members serving in any of the five positions must meet the following:

AmeriCorps eligibility requirements:

- Be a US citizen, US national, Lawful Permanent Resident Alien of the U.S. and/or tribal member
- Be at least 18 years old
- Hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED
- Have served no more than three previous terms as an AmeriCorps member
- Pass a criminal history background check, including an FBI check

TerraCorps desired qualifications:

- Strong writing and verbal communication skills
- Able to serve both independently and as a member of a team
- Comfort navigating computer software programs (relevant to coordinator position)
- Training/ experience pertinent to specific coordinator position (RCC, LSC, CEC, YEC, UAC)
- Experience training/ educating community members and volunteers

*When creating position descriptions, service sites will be able to add three additional desired qualifications specific to the envisioned projects/ role of your service member.*

All TerraCorps positions are full-time (1,700 hours over 11 months). Service sites can apply to take on one or more members. Sites that apply to host multiple members may be given priority in the selection process.

TerraCorps aims to support nonprofit organizations with different capacities, including all-volunteer organizations without staff. If an organization desires to become a service site but does not have sufficient capacity to afford and/or effectively supervise a member, we encourage them to share members and collaborate on projects with regional partner organization. Over the years we have had a number of such pairings, each slightly different, that are highly successful. For more info on how this may work for your organization, please speak with the TerraCorps Chief Program Officer, Hanna Mogensen.

## **5) Prohibited Service Activities for AmeriCorps Members**

AmeriCorps regulations prohibit members from performing services or duties that have been performed by a presently employed worker, an employee who resigned or was discharged within the last six months, or an employee who is on leave. In addition, AmeriCorps members may not conduct any of the following activities as part of their service:

- Attempting to influence legislation or an election, or aiding a partisan political organization
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Engaging in religious instruction or any form of religious proselytization
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements

- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political candidates, political platforms, proposed legislation, or elected officials
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
- Organizing voter registration drives
- Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, a labor union, a partisan political organization, a religious organization, or a nonprofit that engages in lobbying drives
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
- Raising funds for any of the following purposes:
  - to help the service site achieve matching requirements,
  - to fund the AmeriCorps member's own living stipend,
  - to support the service site's operating expenses or endowment,
  - to apply for AmeriCorps funding or any other funding provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, or to apply for funding provided by any other federal agencies
- Spending more than 10% of their time on allowed service-related fundraising activities (those directly related to a member's service projects)

## **6) TerraCorps Service Site Eligibility Requirements**

- Is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization (or fiscally sponsored by a 501 (c) 3) in MA with land conservation, land access, or sustainable land use as part of its mission or vision statement.
- The service site (or lead site if sharing a member) is a community-based land-focused group (e.g. regional land trust; local land trust; watershed association; groundwork trust; urban farming, greening, and land access orgs; etc.)
- Demonstrates capacity to accommodate and achieve measurable outcomes for increasing organization's and region's capacity for land conservation, revitalization, or access (See Appendix A: TerraCorps Federal Performance Measures)
- Organization (or lead organization if sharing a member) has at least one full-time staff member, a part-time staff member, or a board of director-level equivalent volunteer who can oversee the supervision of TerraCorps members.
- Demonstrates capacity for member training, mentoring, and supervision (See Service Site responsibilities below)
- Provides member with standard office and equipment needs and any special equipment needed to perform their service activities
- Has liability insurance that covers the AmeriCorps member(s) while performing service at the organization and in the field
- Offers services without regard to age, religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or national origin
- Has an established sexual harassment policy (if your organization does not have a policy, we encourage you to reach out to TC staff and talk about resources you may use to create and adopt a policy before hosting a member)
- Provides a drug-free workplace
- Provides accessibility to people with disabilities
- Will cover the following program funding match per full-time position:
  - 1) \$8,250-\$10,000 sliding scale admin fee to TerraCorps
  - 2) \$1,500 or more for your member's service-related travel, training, and supplies (not

- including a computer);
- 3) In-kind personnel expenses for ~ 180 hours of staff time

**7) Service Site Responsibilities**

TerraCorps service sites will:

- Utilize members only to provide services that support the TerraCorps mission
- Assist with member recruitment, selection, onboarding, and retention
- Provide a positive and constructive professional atmosphere for TerraCorps members to serve in that provides professional service space, computer use, and office equipment equal to the tasks in a member's position description.
- Orient staff about AmeriCorps and TerraCorps and the roles and responsibilities, and ensure member compliance
- Provide ongoing mentorship and support to members: Create service plan, conduct weekly check-ins, oversee member reporting, participate in bi-annual member evaluation, value and recognize member contributions.
- Take an active role in identifying the training needs of TerraCorps members and assist in providing resources to meet those training needs
- Participate in TerraCorps trainings and events and release members to attend mandatory AmeriCorps meetings, service days, and trainings.
- Select a Site Supervisor to provide members with supervision and mentoring and budget 160 - 200 hours (roughly 8%) of this staff person's time to carry out TerraCorps tasks as described below:
- Have liability insurance that covers the AmeriCorps member(s) while performing service at your organization and in the field.

**8) Program Timeline**

Service Site Applications are released in January, with service site and member recruitment and selection happening thereafter from February-August. All selection and release of materials will happen on a rolling basis.

January:	Service Site Application released
March	Service Site Applications accepted on a rolling basis until all positions filled
March	Selected Service sites are informed
March 15:	Recruitment Strategies Info Session for Supervisors (webinar). Recorded
April	Member Application Release: Begin member recruitment
April-July:	Applicant interviews, offers, and acceptances ongoing until positions filled
May/June:	Notice of AmeriCorps Program Grant Award funding
August 28:	Site Supervisor Orientation Meeting during member orientation
Aug 26-Aug 30	Member Orientation by TerraCorps
Sept 3-6:	Member Orientation at Service Site
October 7:	Member Service Plans due to TerraCorps staff
Feb 2020:	Mid-Term Member Performance Evaluation
Feb-March:	Site Visits by TerraCorps staff
July 20-24:	End-of-Term Member Evaluation and Exit Interviews
July 24, 2020:	Member Recognition Event and Last Day of Service

Note: program service site applications begin in February, with service site and member recruitment and

selection following a similar schedule from March-August.

## **9) Service Site Application and Selection Process**

TerraCorps Service Site Application Forms are posted at [terracorps.org/become-a-service-site/](http://terracorps.org/become-a-service-site/). Applications for the 2019-2020 service year will be posted in January. Current service sites fill out a re-application form available on our website.

Service site applications are due March 1<sup>st</sup>, with an early-March target for a full roster. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis after that if there are still unassigned AmeriCorps member positions available. The program will begin AmeriCorps member recruitment by mid-March. Send completed applications to [admin@terracorps.org](mailto:admin@terracorps.org). Two references will be called for each new organization applying with the aim of confirming the following qualifications:

- The organization provides a healthy environment and positive culture for its staff and volunteers.
- The organization performs work to the satisfaction of partnering groups or individuals.
- The organization meets financial commitments and provides timely administrative reporting.

A review committee headed by TerraCorps will select service sites based on the following criteria:

- 1) Service site eligibility requirements
- 2) Synergy between proposed service projects and TerraCorps' mission and vision
- 3) Community needs addressed by the member's service
- 4) Level of supervision, training, and mentoring provided to the member
- 5) Past performance of the service site working with volunteers and/or AmeriCorps members
- 6) Service assignments that give members opportunities to develop and lead projects
- 7) Service site administrative capacities and/or reporting history
- 8) Likelihood of the service site sustaining their program involvement
- 9) Number of members hosted by the organization (preference for more than one)
- 10) Potential to implement the TerraCorps program vision for regional cohorts and collaboration among organizations and agencies working within the same region.

*If you have questions about position availability or site selection, contact Hanna Mogensen, TerraCorps Chief Program Officer: [hmogensen@terracorps.org](mailto:hmogensen@terracorps.org) 978-364-9770 x2.*



## Appendix A: TerraCorps Federal Performance Measures for 2019-2021

For this three-year cycle of AmeriCorps funding, the TerraCorps program measures its impacts relative to AmeriCorps' definitions of **Environmental Awareness and Stewardship**, **Volunteer Engagement**, and **Capacity Building**.

**Environmental Awareness and Stewardship** is defined by AmeriCorps as organized efforts to teach about how natural environments function and, particularly, how human beings can manage their behavior and ecosystems to live sustainably.

Our goals for **Environmental Awareness and Stewardship** are for the 48 TerraCorps members to educate or train 5,000+ individuals in environmental stewardship each year. In this measure, "environmental stewardship" is how natural environments function and, particularly, how human beings can manage their behavior and choices in order to live sustainably within those environments. People counted as educated or trained must be from an EXTERNAL AUDIENCE and cannot be staff or recurring volunteers of the service site. Members may perform DIRECT SERVICE delivering education and training under this performance measure.

[The AmeriCorps definition of DIRECT SERVICE is any form of assistance provided directly to individuals, targeted groups, and communities, including hands-on or face-to-face activities.]

Examples of external audiences that TerraCorps members will count as trained or educated are:

- 1) landowners, farmers, and non-service-site volunteer groups such as municipal boards and all-volunteer land trusts engaged in conservation planning, and outreach activities;
- 2) adults and youth participating in internships and short-term stewardship projects or events
- 3) youth, teachers, and parents participating in service learning projects, inquiry-based science education field trips, and outdoor experiential education programs;
- 4) new constituencies (youth and adults) included in projects and events that demonstrate how land conservation can address many community needs, such as public health, economic development, education, poverty and hunger, neighborhood revitalization, and cultural decline.

Members will receive training on effective lesson planning that will guide them in identifying training/ education goals and achieving positive outcomes.

### **Volunteer Engagement**

TerraCorps and AmeriCorps are interested in how members increase volunteer capacity for service sites. The TerraCorps program goal is for members to engage with 2,000 community volunteers who perform a minimum of one hour each of community service.

**Capacity Building** is defined by AmeriCorps as a set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the communities served by AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps considers capacity building activities to be indirect services that enable service sites and their community partners to provide more, better, and sustained direct services. Capacity building activities must:

1. be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model
2. respond to the organization's goal of increasing, expanding or enhancing services in order to address pressing community needs
3. enable the organization to provide a sustained level of more

Our goals for **Capacity Building** are for the 48 TerraCorps members to complete meaningful capacity building projects for 25 service sites and 40 coalition partners (e.g. regional conservation partnerships, food systems coalitions, etc.) totaling in 65 organizations. For each capacity building project, the service site or coalition partner organization will evaluate the degree to which their effectiveness has increased in the area of need addressed by the member's activities.

Each member will complete capacity-building projects for their service sites and coalition partners. In submitting a service site application, supervisors will briefly describe at least two potential capacity building projects for their member's service year. Additional projects can be identified and planned with the member and other organizations over the first months of service.

The following list illustrates the variety of service activities performed by our members that service sites could develop into projects:

*Strengthening Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Management:*

- Creating volunteer land stewardship program for host site to conduct annual monitoring and maintenance of conservation properties.
- Creating videos and manuals to enhance training programs for volunteers
- Recruiting, training, and managing volunteers to conduct monitoring
- Establishing a program of volunteers to conduct organizational outreach at farmers markets, community events, local libraries, and other venues
- Organizing river clean ups, water quality monitoring, community paddles and other service and outreach events to increase citizen engagement in watershed initiatives
- Planning special natural history workshops to enhance the recruitment, training, and retention of volunteer conservation restriction monitors
- Developing partnerships with trail associations, scout troops, and other community groups to create and maintain trails on conservation lands

*Helping Build Organizational Infrastructure and Resources*

- Improving baseline and conservation restriction monitoring documentation and systems to meet LTA standards for accreditation.
- Developing new social media (website, Facebook, etc.) content and/or systems to increase community outreach and enhance volunteer recruitment; training staff and volunteers to use and maintain these new systems.
- Creating videos to promote community awareness of river greenway initiatives
- Sending requests to foundations and businesses for supplies - e.g. waders, binoculars, plants, field guides, lumber for bridges and bird boxes
- Setting up a Google Site and online forms for managing volunteer stewardship activities
- Conducting community surveys to assess needs for land protection and land stewardship training and assistance
- Helping municipal boards update their Open Space and Recreation Plans and create GIS maps for prioritizing land conservation efforts

- Building hoop houses for community gardens; establishing pollinator gardens at land trust headquarters or in schoolyards; establishing trails connecting with hospital grounds

*Developing New Programs and Collaborative Relationships*

- Coordinating advisors on new volunteer Community Councils to help the land trust establish local connections, support, and priorities for its land conservation activities
- Developing a program of children's activities to enrich land trust outreach at farmers markets
- Developing a series of "wellness walks" in partnership with a local hospital
- Developing a climate change monitoring and education program on conservation land, in collaboration with a high school science class and a scientific research center
- Initiating a summer film festival, photography workshops, art shows, or music performances with conservation themes and volunteer assistance
- Initiating a bird monitoring program for youth in urban parks Establishing a garden plot on conservation land, with volunteers organized to provide healthy foods to a community kitchen