



# 8 Reasons to Spend Your Gap Year in AmeriCorps

**Are you or a family member thinking about taking a gap year before heading to college? Using the time to serve in AmeriCorps is a great option, and here are eight reasons why:**

## **1. LEARN WHAT YOU WANT — AND DON'T WANT.**

AmeriCorps gives you some space and time to consider what you value and what you enjoy. The service options in AmeriCorps are plentiful and available in every state — from environmental and outdoors projects to working with students of all ages. Just as importantly, AmeriCorps service in a gap year can help a young person figure out what they do not want to do. Maybe you were thinking about teaching high school students, but after a year of a service in a middle school, you realize you'd prefer to major in early childhood education instead.

## **2. AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY.**

High school has become a hyper-scheduled, high-pressure time for so many students today. Although volunteer and service projects interest many teens and young adults, finding the time to give back to the community is secondary to studying, sports and other activities. In this way, AmeriCorps can provide an opportunity to help others — time that you might not have during or immediately after college.

## **3. GET MONEY FOR COLLEGE.**

Did you know that AmeriCorps members get an education award for college for every term spent in service? Learn more about the Segal Education Award for AmeriCorps, including the current award amounts. Note that some colleges and universities will match this award, too.

## **4. GAIN REAL-WORLD PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.**

AmeriCorps service typically will happen within a non-profit organization, a government agency, a public institution or a school. For a recent high school student with little experience in a professional setting, AmeriCorps gives a true taste of the "real world" — not to mention on-the-job education and training. Often, program managers and organizational leaders can provide valuable mentorship, and you can get a real feel for what your first job after college will be like.

## **5. IT OFFERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS**

Gap years can get expensive, especially if you need to cover your own rent. In AmeriCorps, you could continue to live at home and serve within commuting distance. (AmeriCorps opportunities are available all around the state of Minnesota. Check out this interactive map for some perspective.) Or if you join AmeriCorps NCCC, you could travel the country to do your service with

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travel and residential expenses covered. Plus, certain types of service subsidize or help with housing costs; for example, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity offers an option for group housing at \$200 per month. Reading Corps and Math Corps also offer a \$200 per month housing stipend for members serving in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

#### 6. DO A HYBRID GAP YEAR.

If you're especially worried about falling behind – or the kind of person who wants to get ahead – you might consider a “hybrid” gap year. Enroll in college courses online or part-time and spend the rest of your time serving in AmeriCorps.

#### 7. BOOST THAT RESUME.

AmeriCorps will bolster your college application and your resume. In addition to actually gaining skills and better understanding what it's like to work in an organization or agency, you also will gain a line for your resume that shows that you care about the good of your fellow human beings and serve your country. It's impressive stuff.

#### 8. HAVE AN ADVENTURE.

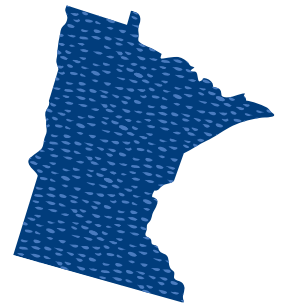
If you just graduated from high school, chances are you haven't experienced much of the world – or even much of your state – on your own, without your family or teachers chaperoning. AmeriCorps can offer a chance to see and experience new things, even in your own backyard.

#### 9. GET PAID.

Unlike most gap year opportunities in which you might be spending money or simply volunteering, AmeriCorps members are given a modest living stipend for their service. You won't get rich, but you can certainly get by – and you'll have more than if you were just traveling and spending your college savings.

**Do you want to learn more about signing up for AmeriCorps during your gap year?**

**Contact us and we'll help you make a plan.**



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