



AmeriCorps

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps FAQ for Prospective Service Sites

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Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Peace Through Action USA?

Peace Through Action USA is a civic and social capital-building organization missioned to achieve peace between people and within communities in the United States of America by promoting caring action. We opened for service in 2017.

What does Peace Through Action do?

Peace Through Action activates and equips Americans to implement practical peaceful solutions to aggression and violence in their communities and our country.

We accomplish this purpose through a general strategy to motivate the public to take actions to increase peace in their homes, places of work, learning, and worship, and their neighborhoods; and an intensive strategy to build civic and social engagement capacity in designated geographic areas by placing servant leaders into those locations. The servant leaders assist community members in developing peacebuilding support structures and they deliver democracy strengthening, social cohesion, and peacebuilding interventions.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. It provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement.

What is Peace Through Action AmeriCorps?

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps is a future national service program we are planning. It will be our national service corps for peace!

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps will provide opportunities for people to serve their communities and country as national service members to implement democracy strengthening,



social cohesion, and peacebuilding interventions in socially stressed communities which seek to ensure safety, facilitate bridging, cultivate belonging, and increase peace among their people and in their places.

Peace Through Action has received an award from AmeriCorps to plan our program. The planning grant, made possible through the AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan Planning Grants funding opportunity, provides us time and resources to build an AmeriCorps program that will be excellent, compliant, enduring, and ready to compete for a program grant in FY 2024.

What is national service?

National service is civilian participation, for fixed terms and sometimes with a living allowance and benefits, in any nongovernmental capacity, in pursuit of and enhancement of the common good and to meet the needs of communities, the states and territories, or the nation.

Who is an AmeriCorps member?

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through a national service position approved by AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. They receive an education award after their service.

AmeriCorps members are neither employees, workers, independent contractors, nor volunteers. They have a separate classification. AmeriCorps requires all of us involved with their programs to call people in their national service positions “AmeriCorps members.”

What challenge will Peace Through Action AmeriCorps address?

The program will address social discord, a major challenge of our time. We are a nation with too many hurting people. Our country is in the throes of toxic polarization, social strife, and violence. Indicators of this social distress include:

- Low levels of trust in government, media, organized religion, and other institutions;
- Stark polarization of people along ideological, cultural, and geographic lines;
- Prejudices against people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+, with disabilities, religious minorities, immigrants, living in poverty, and living in rural communities; and
- High levels of interpersonal aggression and violence, including incivility, bullying, hate crimes, sexual violence, and gun violence.

What is social discord?

The lack of agreement or harmony between people and groups.

What is aggression?

Behavior that causes harm to another person.

What is violence?

The intentional use of force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.



[What is an intervention?](#)

A combination of activities or services designed to change knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors or improve conditions for specific individuals or groups.

[What is democracy?](#)

A form of self-governance usually exercised through a system of elected political representatives that carry out the business of governing on behalf of the people self-governed.

[What is democracy strengthening?](#)

Activities that improve the conditions for countries to thrive and individuals within those countries to reach their full potential by ensuring an educated and engaged people, evidence-based policy, equal opportunities, social mobility, freedom from corruption, freedom of thought, freedom from discrimination, and self-actualization.

[What is social cohesion?](#)

The extent to which groups are bound together by harmonious relations, work together, and feel obligated toward common purpose.

[What is peacebuilding?](#)

The general term for a wide range of efforts to address the root causes and immediate impacts of aggression or violence before, during, and after aggression or violence occurs.

[What is safety?](#)

The condition of being protected from undergoing or causing danger, risk, injury, hurt, or loss.

[What is bridging?](#)

The action of coming together across divides to listen and understand each other, to explore shared values, build relationships, and to make collaboration the norm.

[What is belonging?](#)

The state of experiencing social connection, psychological safety, and sense of agency within a group.

[What is peace?](#)

The dynamic condition generated when harmony, justice, and order flourish together.

[How will Peace Through Action place AmeriCorps members into U.S. communities?](#)

Peace Through Action will apply to AmeriCorps for a program grant. When awarded such a grant, Peace Through Action, as the prime grantee, will be granted AmeriCorps member positions and accompanying funds. Peace Through Action will then form agreements with community organizations (which could be grassroots, community-based, faith-based, or public) to receive the AmeriCorps members to meet community social needs. We call these recipient community organizations service sites. (AmeriCorps uses terms “operating site,” “host site,” and “service location.”)



What services will Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members provide?

Generally, Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members will deliver democracy strengthening, social cohesion, and peacebuilding interventions to members of the communities in which they are placed. These interventions will include group dialogues; skills training in compassion, restorative circles, upstander intervention, and other essential practices; and personal and small group action planning for peace.

All service sites participating in Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members will be expected to have their members organize and deliver one or more group dialogues. Peace Through Action will train our members in two dialogue methods. Service sites may choose to deploy one or more of these methods or pursue another method of their choice. Regardless of methods used, we will apply a common group dialogue performance measurement instrument across our program.

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members may offer additional direct service interventions as well, depending on the needs of the community that they serve and the number of hours the member is serving.

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members may also provide capacity-building services. Capacity-building services include conducting needs assessments and services gaps analyses; leading planning processes; and developing and maintaining coalitions of organizations with common peacebuilding purposes.

What is expected to result from a Peace Through Action AmeriCorps member having served our community?

One expected result is that the communities which Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members serve generally and the community organizations themselves will increase their capacities to offer and maintain group dialogues, peaceful practices skills trainings, and other peaceful practices, meaning that more community members will have access to resources and services that help them behave more peacefully with each other. Another expected result from AmeriCorps members' service is that individual community members will have more and better skills to resist aggression and violence and to practice peace.

Peace Through Action USA will monitor whether these results occur through Peace Through Action AmeriCorps by members reporting progress of their service and by collecting information from operating sites, community leaders, and community members.

Are there activities that AmeriCorps members are prohibited from doing?

AmeriCorps members are prohibited from:

- Attempting to influence legislation.
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes.
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing.
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office.
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials.

- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization.
- Providing a direct benefit to—
 - A business organized for profit.
 - A labor union.
 - A partisan political organization.
 - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in IRS section 501(c)(3).
 - An organization engaged in religious activities, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities.
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive.
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.
- Engaging in census activities.
- Providing services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities.
- Serving as clerical or other secretarial support for any service site.
- Supervising other AmeriCorps members.
- Duplicating an activity that is already available in the area.
- Displacing employees or volunteers, infringing on promotional opportunities, or supplanting the hiring of employed workers.

Who may serve as an AmeriCorps member?

Federal law requires AmeriCorps members to be a U.S. citizen, national or permanent resident, over age 17, a high school graduate or equivalent, and have not been convicted of murder or a sex offense.

Peace Through Action will welcome as applicants for AmeriCorps positions any person who desires to serve for peace and who meets the federal eligibility criteria. AmeriCorps members may inhabit the very communities they serve, or they may be from other parts of the country.

Service sites will set the qualifications requirements for their AmeriCorps member positions.

Peace Through Action will screen applicants for their motivations, qualifications, and skills. Also, we will conduct a national service criminal history check on finalists for AmeriCorps positions.

Service sites will assist in AmeriCorps member recruitment by getting word about the positions out in the community. They will refer candidates to the AmeriCorps website to submit applications. Service sites will hold interviews with and select their members. Service sites maintain the right to decline candidates.

For how long will the AmeriCorps member serve?

The AmeriCorps State and National program allows members to serve a variety of terms. Terms are based on the minimum number of required service hours, not lengths of time. For example, a member on an abbreviated time term of 100 minimum hours could complete their term by spending 25 hours per week for four weeks or 10 hours per month for ten months.



Members with full-time terms of 1700 minimum hours typically serve close to 12 full months. On the other hand, AmeriCorps members serving at an elementary school may have a term length that aligns with the school year length.

Peace Through Action and service sites will determine together the best term lengths for your AmeriCorps positions. We make this decision together when we co-develop an assignment description and service opportunity listing.

[How many hours per week will the AmeriCorps member serve?](#)

Generally, Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members will be able to serve any of the seven term types permitted by AmeriCorps. Specifically, they will serve the term types requested by the service site. See our service term and site participation fee table posted at <https://PeaceThroughAction.org/AmeriCorpsSites> for the seven term types and the average weekly hours associated with each term.

Service sites will declare their requested term types when they submit their application to Peace Through Action to join our annual federal AmeriCorps application.

[What days and hours will the AmeriCorps member serve?](#)

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members' service schedules will vary and will be determined by a combination of their communities' needs and the members' preferences. Generally, our AmeriCorps members can expect to serve a mix of business hours on weekdays, weeknights, and weekends.

[Will Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members receive pay? How much?](#)

Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members will receive a living allowance. See the service term table for the gross living allowances we will pay in FY 2024 for each term type. We will disburse living allowances in semi-monthly increments. Peace Through Action disburses pay. Service sites do not administer member payroll.

[What other benefits do AmeriCorps members receive during their service term?](#)

AmeriCorps State and National grantees must provide health insurance to members serving full-time terms. Members may decline to participate if they have other health insurance coverage.

AmeriCorps State and National grantees may offer health insurance to members serving less than full-time terms. In FY 2024 Peace Through Action will not universally offer health insurance to members serving less than full-time terms. Rather, we will allow service sites to decide whether they have capacity to contribute cash for health insurance premiums for their members. If they do, we will add a health insurance supplement amount to the service site's participation fee.

Peace Through Action selects the health insurance program, pays premiums, and assists members in enrollment. Service sites do not have responsibility for health insurance benefit administration.

AmeriCorps offers a childcare benefit program to full-time members.

A portion of AmeriCorps members' service hours are reserved for education and training.

AmeriCorps members who complete their terms are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps education award, the amount of which can be applied to qualified student loan repayment or to future education. The award amount varies depending on the member's service term type. See the service term table for FY 2024 education award amounts.



AmeriCorps members' service terms count toward the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

[Can we remove an AmeriCorps member from our site?](#)

Yes. The service site may request that Peace Through Action remove the AmeriCorps member from their site. Removal requests should be based on cause factors and be documented with evidence of deficient performance or violations of standards of conduct.

[Who will supervise the AmeriCorps member?](#)

Peace Through Action staff members will lead the supervision of AmeriCorps members. Our supervision ensures the members receive a standardized orientation to program requirements, receive training on program interventions; encourage positive conditions and committed people to be in place in the communities they serve; manage the relationship between Peace Through Action and service sites; provide technical assistance to AmeriCorps members on executing their assignments; and monitor and evaluate members' performance.

[What are my organization's/the community's responsibilities?](#)

Service sites help with supervising and supporting the AmeriCorps member by identifying a key staff member or volunteer to serve as the member's primary point of contact; collaborating with Peace Through Action USA to develop a specific assignment for the AmeriCorps member; connecting the AmeriCorps member to stakeholders key to their assignment; integrating the AmeriCorps member into site and community developmental and social activities when appropriate; and monitoring the member's progress and performance.

Service sites must ensure there is a local person responsible for maintaining sight and sound contact and regular communication with the AmeriCorps member sufficient frequency for that local person to verify the member's claimed service hours.

Also, service sites must provide or arrange a physical location from which the AmeriCorps member will serve. Peace Through Action AmeriCorps members cannot serve from their homes unless they are doing so as an approved reasonable accommodation due to a disability.

[Is our community expected to help fund the program? What is the participation fee?](#)

Federal law establishes the AmeriCorps State and National program as a public-private partnership program. The law requires ASN grantees to match the AmeriCorps funds.

In FY 2024, AmeriCorps funds are capped at \$25,000 per full-time member, and lesser amounts for each other term type. The amount of AmeriCorps funds provided are valuable, but nevertheless insufficient to meet the full cost of directly supporting an AmeriCorps member, much less to operate the program.

To reach the amount of total program revenues required, grantees typically require service sites to contribute funds by way of participation fees in cash and/or in-kind contributions. Peace Through Action will follow this revenue model and require service sites to provide cash. The cash amount depends on the term types of the AmeriCorps positions the site is seeking. See the service term table for the participation fee for each term type.

The service site's participation fee goes toward paying the member's FICA, health insurance premium (if applicable), national service criminal history check fee, AmeriCorps brand attire, member training, member recruitment, and program data collection.



Also, the service site participation fee includes a living allowance supplement to raise them to the maximum levels AmeriCorps allows. For example, for a full-time member, the minimum required living allowance amount is only \$18,700, a bit above federal poverty level. However, AmeriCorps allows grantees to pay members higher than minimum amounts. Going above the minimum is the financial responsibility of the grantee. In the case of full-time members, the maximum allowable living allowance amount for FY 2024 is \$37,400, which is living wage or near-living wage level.

Of course, Peace Through Action will not assess fees on service sites until after we have received an AmeriCorps grant award AND have formalized an agreement with the service site.

We will collect the fee in quarterly installments to provide sites time for ongoing fundraising and to assist with their cash flow.

[Why is Peace Through Action's service site participation fee higher than other AmeriCorps programs with which I am familiar?](#)

The primary factor leading to Peace Through Action's service site participation fee being higher than that of other AmeriCorps State and National grantees you may have experience with or conversation with is that we have decided to pay member living allowances at their maximum allowable levels rather than at or near their minimum required levels. We are doing so to lower barriers to some people's ability to serve their communities and our country through AmeriCorps due to inability to meet basic living needs on the low living allowance amount without also having to earn secondary income, obtain public income assistance, or depend on others (such as parents or partners).

Also, AmeriCorps programs are experiencing recruitment and retention challenges due largely to people declining to serve at living allowance levels that threaten their ability to meet basic living needs. Our providing higher living allowances will make our AmeriCorps opportunities more attractive to prospective applicants and will lead to more of our members completing their terms. For service sites, this can translate into you having a larger applicant pool from which to choose and a member more likely to stay with you the full length of time they committed to you.

A secondary consideration when comparing our service site participation fees to other grantees is if the comparison is with AmeriCorps VISTA grants. AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps VISTA are sibling programs, with many differences between them. In AmeriCorps VISTA the federal government covers the entire living allowance and FICA expense and further does not allow grantees to pay above the VISTA allowance amounts. Also, in AmeriCorps VISTA the federal government pays for members' health insurance and criminal history check. So of course a grantee would not include those expenses in any service participation fee they assess.

[We want to participate in Peace Through Action AmeriCorps, but the service site participation fee presents a barrier. How might we overcome this challenge?](#)

You can choose to request AmeriCorps member positions at any of the seven term types, some of which may have associated service site participation fees that ARE within your current financial capacity or that you have confidence you could raise money from within your community.

You can invite one or more other community organizations to take a collective approach and view the AmeriCorps member as a resource for the community, not your organization alone. And in so doing, each organization in the collective can contribute a smaller amount each toward the service site participation fee rather than a single organization holding the entire financial responsibility.



Peace Through Action will be preparing a sample pitch script, letter of inquiry, and short proposal that you can adapt to your organization and community and then use for local level fundraising.

[May we request more than one AmeriCorps member?](#)

Yes! Service sites may request as many AmeriCorps members as they feel they can utilize effectively, oversee and support, and for which they can pay their service site participation fees.

[May we organize a group of community organizations to receive one or more AmeriCorps members?](#)

Absolutely! Please do form collaborations with allied organizations in your community if a collective approach suits. There will need to be one organization designated as the single point of contact for Peace Through Action and for the AmeriCorps members.

[I'm interested! What should I do next?](#)

Join Peace Through Action's upcoming AmeriCorps program application as one of our proposed service sites. You may find the service site application at <https://PeaceThroughAction.org/AmeriCorpsSites>. Service site applications are due December 8, 2023.

On the [AmeriCorps Service Sites webpage](#) you will find this FAQ, a PowerPoint presentation, a service term site participation fee table, and a summary description of Peace Through Action AmeriCorps program interventions.

You may contact Peace Through Action at AmeriCorps@PeaceThroughAction.org or 202-827-5967, ext. 1 to request an individualized consultation or a presentation to your stakeholders.

You can become more familiar with our future program by perusing the program description and other materials on <https://PeaceThroughAction.org/AmeriCorps>.

If your community could benefit from a Peace Through Action AmeriCorps member, but you do not feel your organization is the best suited as the service site, please bring this opportunity to the attention of others in your community.