

Graceland University AmeriCorps Youth Launch



Graceland University
AmeriCorps Youth Launch
Developing Youth in South Central Iowa

Member Handbook 2020-2021



AmeriCorps Youth Launch 2020-2021

Welcome to the AmeriCorps Youth Launch Family! This handbook has been prepared to assist you, an AmeriCorps Member, in your very important role in this program. It is designed to tell you more about AmeriCorps and answer any questions that you may have regarding the goals and guidelines of AmeriCorps. Congratulations on your decision to join this innovative and exciting program and best of luck in this rewarding year for you!

Graceland University and AmeriCorps

Graceland University cares about building strong communities. As a major employer and community partner in south central Iowa, Graceland has an interest in being civically engaged. This is why the AmeriCorps Youth Launch program has been created and sponsored by Graceland. It is our hope that the many educational and enrichment opportunities offered by the AmeriCorps Youth Launch Program will enrich the lives of the youth in our region which will in turn strengthen our communities as we move into the future.

AmeriCorps

In 1993, Congress enacted the National and Community Service Act, creating the Corporation of National and Community Service (CNCS). President Clinton signed the legislation soon after, and AmeriCorps was launched the following year. CNCS allocated funding to each state volunteer commission to operate AmeriCorps programs in that state. CNCS is the federal level partner of Iowa AmeriCorps programs. In conjunction with oversight from CNCS, each state commission administers their own AmeriCorps Program. Volunteer Iowa is the state level partner of Iowa AmeriCorps programs. Volunteer Iowa promotes volunteerism and community service through the state of Iowa.

Goals and Philosophy

AmeriCorps is a national service movement that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to address the most critical problems in our nation's communities in the areas of education, public safety, the environment and other human needs.

Mission

Getting Things Done—through the direct and demonstrable services that help solve community problems.

Strengthening Communities—by bringing together Americans of all ages and backgrounds in the common effort to improve our communities.

Encouraging Responsibility—by enabling members to explore and exercise their responsibilities towards communities, families, and themselves.

Expanding Opportunity-*by enhancing educational opportunities, job experience and life skills.*

AmeriCorps Terms

Because of the unique and innovative nature of the AmeriCorps program and Partners in Learning, terminology has been developed to accurately represent details of AmeriCorps. Some frequently used terms are:

Members: *people who participate in AmeriCorps are referred to as this rather than volunteers, staff, workers, participants, or employees*

Service: *serve or provide service in their AmeriCorps assignments*

Living Allowance: *if an AmeriCorps member is paid during their service, he/she receives a living allowance rather than a salary or wage*

AmeriCorps Gear: *AmeriCorps members proudly wear shirts during their service that carry the AmeriCorps logo to promote the program in their community*

National Service: *this term refers to any of the programs affiliated with Corporation of National Service; in addition to AmeriCorps, national service programs include Learn & Serve America, AmeriCorps VISTA, the National Civilian Community Corps and the National Senior Service Corps*

Education Award

The AmeriCorps program expands the opportunities for individuals to take part in community service and earn education awards as AmeriCorps Members. Upon successful completion of their term of service, an AmeriCorps Member qualifies for an AmeriCorps Education Award. For three quarters time (1200 hours) this award is \$4,336.50, for half-time (900 hours) this award is \$3,097.50, for reduced half time (675 hours) this award is \$2,360.00 for quarter-time (450 hours) this award is \$1,638.98, and for minimum-time (300 hours) this award is \$1,311.11.

This Education Award may be used to repay existing qualified student loans or pay the cost of attending a qualified institution of higher education. Members can receive up to two Education Awards, regardless of whether they are for full-time, half-time, or quarter time.

Living Allowance

AmeriCorps Youth Launch members receive a living allowance of \$9,900 for three quarters time (TQT) members, \$7,425 for half-time (HT), \$5,569.00 for reduced half-time(RHT), \$3,712.00 for quarter-time, and \$2,475.00 for minimum-time(MT).

Matches

The AmeriCorps grant requires a cash match which for our program is provided by the **Dekko Foundation**. Each service site which hosts a member is also expected to provide a cash match dependent upon the amount of AmeriCorps service hours at that site.

Graceland University AmeriCorps Youth Launch

The mission of AmeriCorps Youth Launch is to provide opportunities for students to lead successful, rewarding and productive lives. AmeriCorps Members build valuable developmental assets, instill civic engagement, and help young people find the “sparks” that ignite their passions in life.

AmeriCorps Youth Launch Members

Our AmeriCorps members will offer the individual attention many high barrier youth need to become educationally successful and academically engaged. AmeriCorps members will be a part of a team within the schools where they are serving. The team will identify youth who could benefit from extra individualized attention. Through service in the schools, during after-school programs, and within other youth-serving community programs, our members will provide the following services to increase the chances that these target youth will become academically engaged and educationally successful: Build developmental assets, help youth identify and connect with Champions, ignite sparks, set academic and personal goals, recruit mentors, engage youth in service projects and provide enrichment opportunities.

AmeriCorps Youth Launch in collaboration with site supervisors and members will create a specific position description for the specific site and the member’s duties at that site. This position description should provide opportunities for the member to build each of the 7 assets that AYL is targeting this year:

1. Other Adult Relationships
2. Achievement Motivation
3. Planning and Decision Making
4. Responsibility
5. Self-Esteem
6. Service to Others
7. Creative Activities

The youth who have been identified, will need to complete both the pre and post Developmental Asset Rubric. Members will work throughout the year to build Developmental Assets, assist youth in setting and making progress towards personal and academic goals, and help youth identify 3+ people in their communities that they consider “Champions”. All of this data will be collected throughout the pre and post assessment process. Members will submit the pre and post assessment scores for all youth served through Google Docs, and they will also track the time they spend serving identified students through the Monthly Youth Tracking form in Google Docs.

AmeriCorps Youth Launch Program Director

The Program Director is one of your most valuable resources. The Director helps to develop your partnership with AmeriCorps and is therefore familiar with many of the details and policies of AmeriCorps and CNCS. The Director oversees implementation of the grant from CNCS and is therefore responsible for insuring compliance with all reporting requirements and guidelines. At any time throughout your term of service, feel free to contact the AmeriCorps Youth Launch Program Director, Nancy Hoffman with any questions or concerns at 641-784-5476 or nancyh1@graceland.edu.

The AmeriCorps Pledge

**I will get things done for America –
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.**

**I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.**

**Faced with apathy,
I will take action.**

**Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.**

**Faced with adversity,
I will preserve.**

**I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.**

**I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.**