

# EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS AMERICORPS JD PROGRAM

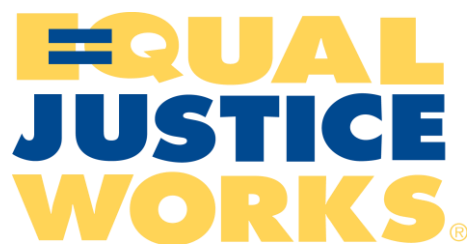
*AmeriCorps JD Application Guide*

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## Table of Contents

Eligibility Criteria .....	2
Qualifying Host Organization .....	2
Qualifying Projects and Prohibited Activities.....	3
Qualifying Projects for Priority Areas.....	3
Application Selection Criteria .....	3
Application Requirements and Process .....	4
Background Checks .....	4
Questions .....	5

## Eligibility Criteria

AmeriCorps JD is a federally funded AmeriCorps program. As such, members are subject to certain eligibility requirements including immigration status and Equal Justice Works requires that students attend member law schools.

### ***Immigration status***

In order to be eligible for any AmeriCorps program, including AmeriCorps JD, you must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States. All applicants are required to provide proof of their status by submitting eligibility documentation, such as a copy of an unexpired U.S. passport, birth certificate, and certificate of naturalization or Lawful Permanent Resident card.

### ***Law school status***

In order to participate in AmeriCorps JD, you must be a current student at an [Equal Justice Works member law school](#).

### ***Restrictions on outside funding***

Members can seek additional sources of funding up to \$4,300 for their projects per term and are encouraged to do so. Law school, bar foundation, and other public interest Fellowship awards are acceptable. Because AmeriCorps JD is an AmeriCorps program, members cannot receive an hourly wage, except for Federal Work Study Awards. AmeriCorps JD members cannot receive law school credit for their service because the AmeriCorps Education Award they receive at the end of their service is considered compensation by the American Bar Association entity that oversees law school accreditation.

## Qualifying Host Organization

In order to be eligible for AmeriCorps JD, a student must have secured a placement with a qualifying host organization prior to submitting an application.

### ***Qualifying host organizations***

- Organizations that are already hosting Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and Equal Justice Works Fellows
- Nonprofit organizations serving veterans, military families, homeowners facing foreclosure, victims of disaster, or organizations engaged in medical-legal partnerships
- Nonprofit legal service organizations receiving funding from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC)
- Nonprofit civil rights organizations
- Federal, state or local government agencies
- Federal or state District Attorney offices or public defender's offices

The following do not qualify as AmeriCorps JD host organizations:

- Internationally-focused or internationally-based organizations
- Organizations primarily engaged in lobbying or impact litigation
- Environmental organizations
- Judicial clerkships (unless with a Veterans Treatment Court)
- For-profit entities, including private law firms of any sort

For further information on where AmeriCorps members can serve and the benefits to service, please visit the [AmeriCorps website](#).

## Qualifying Projects and Prohibited Activities

AmeriCorps JD members must provide direct legal services to low-income and underserved individuals. The student's project is **not eligible** if he/she will only do policy work or environmental work.

### **Qualifying work examples**

- *Direct legal services:* supporting client intake, preparing legal forms, performing client and witness interviews, advocating for clients by telephone and in person, attending hearings, assisting attorneys in legal representation, and/or carrying out legal research and writing.
- *Outreach and education:* developing and distributing fact sheets, developing and delivering training on legal topics or accessing legal services, and/or ensuring potential clients are aware of their rights and available services.
- *Capacity building:* building the capacity of the host organization or other organizations to work in the previously specified priority areas through organizational assessment, compiling best practices, organizing focus groups, and/or leading planning committees.

### **Activities prohibited by AmeriCorps during service hours, include but are not limited to:**

- Proselytizing or engaging in religious instruction
- Attempting to influence legislation (lobbying)
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Engaging in partisan political activities including elections and voter registration drives or referring or promoting abortion services
- Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, including small businesses

The student is welcome to conduct any of these activities during their personal time as long as they are not counting the time as AmeriCorps service hours or wearing AmeriCorps identifying logos. All AmeriCorps JD members must sign a document certifying they do not partake in any prohibited activities throughout the course of their project.

## Qualifying Projects for Priority Areas

Qualifying projects for Equal Justice Works priority areas include veteran services, disaster relief, and removing barriers from employment and housing. The project must provide services within the priority area for at least 50 percent of the required 300 hours (150 hours or more).

Specific examples of removing barriers to employment or housing include sealing, expunging, and/or correcting criminal records; correcting credit reports; helping clients obtain occupational licenses; and/or restoring driver's licenses that are necessary for work.

## Application Selection Criteria

Equal Justice Works evaluates AmeriCorps JD applications and selects members based on a number of factors including:

- Quality of the application
- Applicant and host site eligibility
- Geographic and law school diversity
- Host organization status (preference for projects with host organizations that are current AmeriCorps Legal Fellow host sites, Equal Justice Works Fellowship host sites (see [here](#) for current Fellows), Veteran Treatment Courts, and/or are funded by the Legal Services Corporation)
- Project status (preference for projects in which all 300 hours of service will be spent serving veterans or disaster victims, particularly for those choosing Fall or Winter start dates)

## Application Requirements and Process

Once you have secured a position with a host organization, it should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete the application (not including the time required for your host site to sign the contract). A completed application consists of the following:

- Member profile
- Demographic AmeriCorps Information
- Project and host site information
- Signed contract (by host site and applicant)
- Signed criminal background check release form
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or resident status (scan and upload a copy of a U.S. passport, or driver's license/government-issued ID AND either social security card or birth certificate)
- Resume
- Applicant snapshot (optional)

### ***Application process:***

1. Create an account in the **Student Application Manager (SAM)**. A message will be sent to your email account with login information and application instructions. Be sure to check the email account you used to register in SAM.
2. If you do not receive a message from [AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org](mailto:AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org), check your spam filters. Please also add [AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org](mailto:AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org) to your safe sender list.
3. Return to **SAM** to complete the application and submit the proper documentation.

Only complete applications will be considered. Equal Justice Works will use the information in your application to evaluate you for AmeriCorps JD membership and, if selected, register you with AmeriCorps. All information remains confidential and secure.

## Background Checks

As an AmeriCorps-funded national service program, all AmeriCorps JD applicants must consent in writing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check, which includes a National Sex Offender Public Registry search, a state criminal registry checks in the state of service and residence at time of application; and an FBI nationwide fingerprint-based criminal history check (NOTE: for students applying

between Apr. 25, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2015, a temporary exemption is in place for the FBI check). Accepted applicants must follow all steps necessary to undergo the required criminal background checks.

Equal Justice Works will conduct and review the results of each National Service Criminal History Check after applicants have applied to AmeriCorps JD but prior to enrolling those who are selected as AmeriCorps JD members. Selection for AmeriCorps JD is contingent upon Equal Justice Works' review of the background check results. Having a criminal conviction is not an automatic bar to service. Each application is reviewed on a case by case basis. The AmeriCorps JD application provides further details about the criminal background check process.

## Questions

If you have any questions about the application process for AmeriCorps, please contact us at [americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org).

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AmeriCorps JD is an [AmeriCorps](#) program.