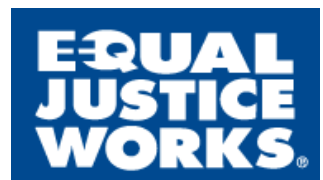


# AmeriCorps Application

## 2017-2018

*Equal Justice Works  
Veterans Legal Corps  
AmeriCorps*

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## Introduction

Equal Justice Works seeks results-oriented organizations to lead the Veterans Legal Corps in exciting initiatives designed to change the lives of veterans through high-quality, targeted legal services. This is an AmeriCorps program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), and contingent upon funding, will provide partial funding for 24 AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and 263 AmeriCorps JD (law student) Members, who will be part of a nationwide movement to close the justice gap. Selected organizations will host Fellow(s) and AmeriCorps JD Members, providing direct legal services to underserved and/or low-income communities.

## About Equal Justice Works

The mission of Equal Justice Works is to create a just society by mobilizing the next generation of lawyers committed to equal justice. We provide leadership to ensure a sustainable pipeline of talented and trained lawyers are involved in public service. Equal Justice Works provides a continuum of programs that begin with incoming law school students and extend into careers in the profession. We provide the nation's leading public interest law Fellowship program and offer more post graduate, full-time legal positions in public service than any other organization.

## Overview of Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowships

Supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowship program was created in 1993 to address gaps in the legal aid community through direct representation, volunteer development, and community outreach. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows provide legal services to thousands of people across the country. Fellows have worked in a variety of issue areas including veterans' assistance, foreclosure prevention, disaster relief, and medical-legal partnerships. Veterans Legal Fellows will improve the lives of low-income and homeless veterans by providing legal services that ultimately lead to higher incomes, better health, safer and more secure housing, and family stability. Equal Justice Works funds organizations to host Fellows who will provide the following services:

- ✓ Securing VA disability benefits and/or SSDI/SSI benefits for veterans with complex physical and mental health challenges
- ✓ Eliminating legal barriers to housing
- ✓ Reducing or dismissing fines, warrants, and tickets
- ✓ Reducing unwarranted – or waiving unreasonably high – child support orders
- ✓ Preventing foreclosures and evictions
- ✓ Eliminating legal barriers to employment

## Conditions of Grant Award

Organizations selected as Veterans Legal Corps host sites will be required to comply with the following grant conditions:

- **Program Evaluation:** All selected host sites may be asked to participate in an evaluation of the Veterans Legal Corps through an independent evaluator hired by Equal Justice Works. Host sites that accept this grant must be willing to be a part of the evaluation and work collaboratively with Equal Justice Works and its evaluator to provide data as requested.

- **Grants Management:** Host sites and Fellows will be required to utilize a web-based grants management system to share critical programmatic and financial documents with Equal Justice Works in order to document compliance with grant terms and federal regulations.
- **Health Insurance Coverage:** All AmeriCorps host sites must provide health insurance to otherwise uninsured Fellows. The insurance offered must meet the criteria for Minimum Essential Coverage as described by the Affordable Care Act.
- **Criminal History Checks:** All AmeriCorps Legal Fellows are subject to the National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) process. This includes a name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) (note that a positive NSOPW search will result in automatic disqualification from service per AmeriCorps rules). In addition, Fellows must initiate both state and FBI background checks prior to the start of service. The acceptance of a Fellow based on his/her criminal history, aside from registered sex offenders and individuals who have committed murder, is discretionary.
- **Financial Requirements:** All Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows receive a living allowance of \$24,930, as well as \$12,000-\$21,000 in supplemental benefits. Supplemental benefits are reimbursements for certain allowable living expenses (e.g., rent, utilities, groceries, etc.) that are distributed to each Fellow pursuant to a contract with the host site, for which receipts must be furnished in order to document expenditures. Supplemental benefits must be distinct from the living allowance, which is paid based on pay periods. Additionally, all Fellows are entitled to an education award in the amount of \$5,815 upon successful completion of 1,700 hours of AmeriCorps service over a 11 or 12-month term. This award is provided to the Fellow directly by CNCS, and is not a cost to the host site. Fellows' time and attendance, as well as documentation of supplemental benefits and other grant-related information are provided by the host site through the Equal Justice Works grants management system.
- **AmeriCorps JD:** Each selected host site must commit to recruiting and managing at least two law students per Fellow who will be enrolled into the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps JD program. This is an opportunity for law students to support Fellows in the provision of critical legal services to veterans for a minimum of 300 hours in order to receive an education award of \$1,230.69. Note that, though these law students can (and should) work closely with Fellows, Fellows may not directly supervise AmeriCorps JD students per AmeriCorps rules.
- **Prohibited Activities:** Per AmeriCorps regulations, Fellows may not engage in certain prohibited activities such as lobbying, voter registration, and religious proselytism during their term of service. Please see Appendix A for a full list of all AmeriCorps prohibited activities.
- **Use of Material:** CNCS reserves the right to a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (see 45 CFR § 2543.36; 2541.30).
- **Other Requirements:** Host Sites are responsible for the Fellow(s) and AmeriCorps JD Members complying with all CNCS AmeriCorps Program, Office of Management and Budget regulations, as well as Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps program policies and

guidelines. Further, host sites are responsible for complying with the following performance measures:

- Annual outcomes per Veterans Legal Corps Fellow:
  - 150 veterans served
  - 75 legal cases opened
  - 60 veterans with positive outcomes
  - 24 community legal needs identified
  - 24 community legal needs addressed
  - \$75,000 in economic benefits secured for clients
  - 10 volunteers leveraged

### **Application Timeline**

Proposals must be submitted to Equal Justice Works by July 7, 2017 to receive consideration. Selected sites may be asked to submit additional information. Final notification will be made by no later than August 1, 2017. Please note that acceptance of all proposals will be contingent on the availability of funding.

Fellows begin their term of service between September 1, 2017 and September 30, 2017, and will be required to attend the annual Equal Justice Works Leadership Development Training (LDT) from October 31 – November 2, 2017. Equal Justice Works will provide financial support for Fellows' travel, lodging, and meals during the training. This is an opportunity to meet and network with over 250 Equal Justice Works Fellows across all of our various programs while receiving high-quality training to hone leadership skills. Host site staff will also be required to attend a series of web-based trainings to orient them to the programmatic and financial requirements of the Fellowship. Equal Justice Works staff will also be available to provide training and technical assistance to Fellows and host sites throughout the course of the year.

***Note that the term of the Fellowship is one year.***

Thank you for your interest in national service, Equal Justice Works, AmeriCorps, and the Veterans Legal Corps!

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

In order for your application to be complete, please respond to the questions below as thoroughly and accurately as possible and complete the sample budget in Appendix B. Completed applications should be submitted to Qudsiya Naqui at qnaqui@equaljusticeworks.org and Renee Lavigne at rlavigne@equaljusticeworks.org by July 7, 2017.

**Section I: Host Organization Information**

Name of organization	
DUNS number	
Employer Identification Number (EIN)	
Executive Director (Name, Phone, Email)	
Application Contact (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	
Project Director (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	
Financial Contact (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	
Fellow Supervisor(s) (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	
Organization address (Street, City, State, ZIP)	
Number of AmeriCorps Fellowships requested for 2017– 2018	
Grant funds requested for 2017–2018 (\$24,930 per Fellow requested)	
Number of AmeriCorps JD students proposing to manage in 2017- 2018 (minimum two per Fellow)	
Organization’s total annual operating budget	
Name and location of all employee unions for attorneys (if applicable)	

## Section II: Program Information

### A. AMERICORPS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. State your plan for ensuring compliance with AmeriCorps policies and procedures, including criminal history checks, management of time and attendance, and timely completion of member performance evaluations. Please be sure to address each of the areas listed in your response.

2. Describe your plan for selecting and/or retaining your Fellow(s) in the upcoming grant year. How will you ensure that your Fellow(s) have the tools they need to successfully complete their 1700-hour term(s) of service over the course of 11-12 months?

3. How will your site engage members with the AmeriCorps State Commission in your state? How will you support national days of service (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, September 11, AmeriCorps Week, etc.)?

4. If there is a union at your organization, please provide evidence that the union has been consulted with and approved the placement of AmeriCorps members at your site.

## **B. FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

5. Describe your experience with managing federal and/or state grants. Describe the systems and process used to ensure compliance with federal and/or state financial requirements including tracking funds and financial reporting, managing payroll, compliance with A133 requirements and/or general accepted accounting practices (GAAP), Fellow payroll management, etc. List the amounts of the three largest federal grants your organization received in the past three fiscal years, and describe the source and purpose of the funding. If the funding was renewed, please also note that.

6. State your plan for ensuring that, in the event of staff turnover at your site, relevant personnel (i.e., human resources, financial program directors, supervisors, etc.) are aware of the responsibilities and requirements of this program?

7. State your plan for tracking supplemental benefits to ensure that receipts and other proof of expenditures are collected from your Fellow(s) timely. How will you ensure that supplemental benefit payments align with allowable expenses?

8. All host organizations are required to contribute a minimum of \$25,060 in matching funds for each Fellow hosted. Allowable costs towards this requirement include health insurance, malpractice insurance, FICA, workers' compensation coverage (if applicable), Fellow travel costs, and any other benefits provided to the Fellow. State the source of funds that will count towards your site's match requirements for this grant. State your plan for ensuring that match funds are accounted for separately from grant funds (i.e., the separation of the AmeriCorps living allowance from supplemental benefits).



9. State the ways in which your site maintains an accessible workplace for persons with disabilities. If available, please attach your agency's written accessibility policy.

10. All sites are required to host at least two law students per Fellow. State your plan for recruiting two AmeriCorps JD law students to serve 300 hours in support of your Veterans Legal Corps program during the grant year.

### **C. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

11. Describe your organization's history and past accomplishments with providing legal services to veterans. In the last year, how many clients of this population did you serve? How do these services fit in with your organization's overall mission?

12. Each Fellow in the Veterans Legal Corps will be asked to provide services to at least 150 veterans and legal representation to at least 75 veterans and their family members during the course of their 11 or 12-month term of service. Please state your plan for identifying and screening individuals for service. This may include standard office intake procedures, community presentations targeted at veteran populations, or any other methods that your organization employs to identify and assess the legal needs of its client population.

13. State your plan for providing legal services (including brief services and full representation) to at least 150 clients during the grant term. Include the types of matters for which legal services and representation will be provided by your Fellow.

14. State your plan for utilizing your Fellow(s) and law students to educate the legal community regarding veteran legal issues. Describe the types of training your Fellow(s) and law students will provide to pro bono attorneys and other legal professionals, the frequency of such trainings, and the topics that will be covered.

#### **D. FELLOW TRAINING & SUPPORT**

15. State your plan for providing supervision, training, and mentorship to your Fellow(s) throughout the course of the year.

#### **E. ATTACHMENTS**

16. Attach a copy of your organization's most recent audit (in compliance with OMB A-133 or otherwise) and Form 990. If your audit resulted in any findings, include an explanation of these findings in the space below, as well as any corrective actions that were taken.

## APPENDIX A

### **AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities**

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. 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;
- g. 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;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to—
  - a. A business organized for profit;
  - b. A labor union;
  - c. A partisan political organization;
  - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these 9 provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
  - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 3.g. above, unless  
CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

**Additional note:** The AmeriCorps prohibited activities apply to Veterans Legal Corps Fellows and the volunteers whom they recruit and manage. The prohibited activities do not apply to other staff in the organization.

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Budget for an AmeriCorps Legal Fellow Project (One Fellow)

**Budget Tip:** The host site should limit line items expenses within the “CNCS Amount” column to only proposed amounts for living allowance, which is \$24,930 per Fellow. The Grantee Amount column should include at least the minimum required \$12,000 for supplemental benefits, funds for health insurance, FICA, worker’s compensation insurance, and unemployment insurance (if mandatory in your state), and other benefits provide to the Fellow or cost incurred by the site to host a Fellow. Please give additional information about how you arrived at each figure.

Expense Type	CNCS Amount (from Equal Justice Works)	Sub-Grantee Amount (Host Site Match)	Explanation
<b>1. Program Operating Costs</b>			
A. Travel	\$0.00		
B. Equipment	\$0.00		
C. Supplies	\$0.00		
D. Contractual & Consultant Services	\$0.00		
E. Training (Fellow)	\$0.00		
F. Evaluation	\$0.00		
G. Other	\$0.00		
<b>Subtotal for 1. Program Operating Costs</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>		
<b>2. Member Costs</b>			

A. Living Allowance			
i. FICA for Members	\$0.00		
ii. Workers' Compensation (if applicable)	\$0.00		
iii. Health Care	\$0.00		
iv. Other Benefits	\$0.00		
v. Unemployment Insurance (if applicable)	\$0.00		
v. Supplemental Benefits	\$0.00		
<b>Subtotal for 2. Member</b>			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>Host site must match at least 100% of CNCS funds.</b>