

AmeriCorps JD Application Guide 2016-2017

Equal Justice Works

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Eligibility Criteria

AmeriCorps JD is comprised of four federally funded AmeriCorps programs that are administered by Equal Justice Works. As such, Equal Justice Works requires that members meet certain eligibility requirements including immigration status and Equal Justice Works member law school status.

Immigration Status

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

Law School

Applicants who are current students at an [Equal Justice Works member school](#) will be prioritized for acceptance into the AmeriCorps JD program.

Restrictions on Outside Funding

Members may receive funding in the form of a grant, stipend, or living allowance for their term of service, but this funding may not be earned as an hourly wage unless through Federal Work Study according to AmeriCorps regulations. AmeriCorps does restrict the amount of additional funding members can receive for their service. As such, members will be asked to disclose the amount and method of funding they are receiving during the application, if applicable. Please note that there is no restriction on work outside of your term of service (i.e. part-time job) or outside funds you receive for activities outside of your service (i.e. general scholarship for law school).

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. AmeriCorps JD Members must serve in the United States at a qualifying organization.

Qualifying host organizations include:

- 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)

The following are not qualifying AmeriCorps JD host organizations:

- Internationally-focused or internationally-based organizations

- Organizations primarily engaged in lobbying or impact litigation
- For-profit entities, including private law firms of any sort
- Government agencies

For further information on where AmeriCorps members can serve and the benefits to service, please visit AmeriCorps.gov.

Qualifying Projects

A qualifying project must propose to provide legal services within one of the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps programs listed below. Your project is not eligible if the project is focused on pure policy work or pure environmental work. A project is eligible if it includes support of direct client services to improve the community. All accepted members must complete at least 300 hours of service (450 if accepted to justice AmeriCorps) in order to complete an AmeriCorps service term.

justice AmeriCorps

Law students working in the justice AmeriCorps Program will provide legal assistance to unaccompanied immigrant children facing deportation before the U.S. immigration courts. Students will have the opportunity to hone their legal skills in service to young people fleeing violence and seeking refuge in the U.S. through conducting legal screenings, drafting legal briefs, and preparing applications for asylum to support the representation process. Note: justice AmeriCorps JD members must complete at least 450 hours of service at the host organization.

Veterans Legal Corps

Veterans Legal Corps JD students work towards improving the lives of low-income and homeless veterans by providing legal assistance that ultimately leads to higher incomes, better health, safer and more secure housing, and family stability. JD members will support licensed attorneys in securing benefits for veterans and their families, and eliminate legal barriers to their housing and employment, among other services.

Employment Opportunity Legal Corps

Employment Opportunity Legal Corps JD students will help licensed attorneys mitigate the negative consequences of prior criminal convictions for low-income clients by removing legal barriers to employment. JD Students will assist attorneys with expunging, sealing, or correcting criminal records, and restoring a driver's license, allowing individuals to participate in occupational training or secure gainful employment.

Disaster Legal Corps

JD students participating in Disaster Legal Corps will help improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable populations who reside in communities affected by natural and man-made disasters by securing benefits, avoiding consumer fraud, obtaining safe and secure housing, and promoting family stability. Students will assist attorneys with making claims and appealing denied claims for insurance and disaster assistance, seeking disaster unemployment benefits, and resolving disaster-related housing matters.

Elder Justice AmeriCorps

Elder Justice AmeriCorps JD students will improve the lives of victims of elder abuse by providing legal assistance to older adult victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Law students will focus specifically on assisting attorneys with responding to instances of elder abuse through legal research, drafting briefs, outreach and intake screenings.

As a member, you may not engage in any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps during service hours, including but 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
- referring or promoting abortion services
- providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, including small businesses

As a member, you are welcome to do any of these activities on your own time as long as you are not counting AmeriCorps service hours or wearing AmeriCorps identifying logos. All AmeriCorps JD Members must sign a document certifying that they will not partake in any prohibited activities throughout the course of their project.

Application Selection Criteria

Equal Justice Works evaluates AmeriCorps JD applications and selects members using a number of criteria, such as:

- the quality of the application
- the eligibility of the applicant and applicant's host site
- geographic diversity
- law school diversity (preference given to applicants who attend an [Equal Justice Works member law school](#))
- preference for projects with host organizations that are current AmeriCorps Legal Fellow host sites, Equal Justice Works Fellowship host sites, Veteran Treatment Courts, and/or are funded by the Legal Services Corporation

Application Requirements and Process

Once you have secured a position with a host organization, you can initiate an application. It should take approximately thirty minutes to complete the candidate portion of the application. The host site will need to review and submit the Project Description section in order to complete the application. A completed application consists of the following:

- Member Profile
- Demographic "AmeriCorps Information"
- Project and Host Site information
- Signed Member Service Agreement (By Host Site and Applicant)

- Signed criminal background check release form
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship or Resident status
- Resume
- Applicant snapshot (optional)

Application Process:

1. Create an account in the Student Application Manager (SAM). A message will immediately 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, check your spam filters. Please also add AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org to your safe sender list.
3. Return to SAM to complete the application and submit the proper documentation.
4. Lock-in your application. The individual designated as your host site supervisor must review and edit your project description, if needed. Your supervisor must submit the completed application.
5. If your application is selected, the person designated as the Host Signing Authority at your host site will receive the Member Service Agreement to review and sign.
6. Once your host site has signed the Member Service Agreement, you accept the offer by reviewing and signing the Member Service Agreement. At that point, the mandatory criminal history check process must be initiated before you can begin AmeriCorps service.

Only complete applications, including all required documentation, 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 will be kept confidential and secure. If you don't receive an acceptance or rejection email within seven days of locking-in your application, please inquire about the status of your application by sending an email to AmeriCorpsJD@equaljusticeworks.org.

Criminal History Checks

As an AmeriCorps-funded national service program, all AmeriCorps JD applicants must consent in writing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check. This check includes state criminal registry checks in the state of service and state of residence at time of application, a National Sex Offender Public Registry search, and a fingerprint-based search of the national FBI database. 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 an individual 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.

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AmeriCorps JD is an [AmeriCorps](#) program administered by [Equal Justice Works](#)