



## Life After AmeriCorps Checklist

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This is our suggested timeline to help you prepare for Life After AmeriCorps. It's never too early to start planning for your future. Also included are key reminders related to your service benefits. If your term of service is shorter than ten months, it may be appropriate to condense your timeline. *\*Note that the green underlined words are clickable links.*

### FIRST MONTH OF SERVICE

- ☐ Put current student loans in deferment or forbearance (if applicable).
- ☐ Review the [Ed Award FAQs](#). Confirm the [amount of your Ed Award](#) based on the program year and the number of hours you are serving.
- ☐ Review the resources provided through the [Member Assistance Program](#).
- ☐ Check out WSC's [Member Resource Kit](#). The kit is filled with resources and ideas to help you plan for and complete your AmeriCorps service term.
  - For SNAP benefits: Sign up for [SNAP](#) (known as “Basic Food” in Washington) as soon as you start service, and ask your site staff to fill out [the income verification letter](#) you may need to present to [DSHS](#). You can apply online or at a local Community Services Office. Please note that time spent securing food stamp benefits can be counted as service hours. Hot tip! Members have reported that going in person to a [DSHS office](#) is often quicker than applying by phone. If you have questions about DSHS programs, review their [FAQ](#) or call 1-877-501-2233.

### TWO TO THREE MONTHS INTO SERVICE

- ☐ [Familiarize yourself with the FAFSA](#) and prepare to submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after December 31.
- ☐ Begin your college search. Consider factors like majors, size, location, and cost. Use a database (like the [Princeton Review](#)) to create your list then narrow it by doing online research and attending college information sessions. Familiarize yourself with [Schools of National Service](#) which may offer specific benefits for AmeriCorps alumni.

- ☐ Research which college admissions exams you will need to complete - [SAT](#), [ACT](#), [GRE](#), [LSAT](#), [MCAT](#), [DAT](#).
- ☐ Match interests and skills with career options. Not yet sure what kind of job or career field you want to go into? Check out the [self-guided assessment from CareerOneStop.org](#) to get personalized suggestions based on your interests, skills and workplace values.
- ☐ Research types of occupations within the job sector(s) you're interested in. Gain insight into specific jobs to narrow down your preferences.
  - Use CareerOneStop's [Occupation Profiles](#) or the Washington State [Occupations in Demand Tool](#)
  - Set up [informational interviews](#) with people employed in the type of position or sector you're researching. This may be with staff at your service site, or at organizations you're interested in working for after your service term.
  - Confirm if an occupation you're interested in will require a credential or certification. If so:
    - Discuss with your service site staff if available through them during your service term.
    - Look into online learning providers that offer accredited credentials or certificates, such as [Coursera.org](#). The Washington State Library offers [free certification exams](#) for some I.T. applications.
    - Research state and community/vocational colleges for certificate programs. Confirm with the school or through your MyAmeriCorps account whether you'll be able to use your Segal education award for tuition assistance.
      - [University of Washington](#) (online, on campus)
      - [Washington State University](#) (online)
      - Central Washington University ([online](#), [on campus](#))
      - [Community colleges and trade schools](#)
    - Look into doing an apprenticeship after your service term.
      - [Washington Registered Apprenticeships](#)
      - [Apprenticeship.gov](#)
- ☐ Start enhancing your workplace skills through online training courses.
  - [LinkedInLearning.com](#) – Can access for free with a [Washington State Library card](#)
  - We suggest focusing on:
    - [Project management](#)
    - [Time management](#)
    - [Organization strategies](#)
    - [Conflict management](#)
    - [Visual communication / graphic design](#)
    - [Grantwriting](#)
- ☐ Start planning your future resume.
  - Do this while you're serving, creating a list of relevant skills and professional experience you've gained through your AmeriCorps position along the way.

## FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS BEFORE END OF TERM

- ☐ Prepare your college application. Research [best practices for letters of recommendation](#) and [personal statements](#).
- ☐ Consider whether another year of [AmeriCorps service](#) is right for you (NCCC, State & National, VISTA).
- ☐ Consider continuing to volunteer.
  - <https://www.justserve.org/>
  - <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>
  - <https://www.unitedway.org/get-involved/volunteer>
  - <https://www.idealists.org/en>
- ☐ Interested in International Service? Check out [PeaceCorps](#) and/or [PeaceCorps Response](#)
- ☐ Need Tax Support? AmeriCorps Alums partners with [MyfreeTaxes.com](#) to offer free federal and state tax return filings to alums and current members. Year after year, this free service provides AmeriCorps alums with millions of dollars in tax returns.

## TWO TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE END OF TERM

- ☐ Create your resume.
  - [Learn how](#) to make your resume stand out to employers (and their filtering apps).
  - -- Utilize [WorkSourceWA.com](#) to create and store your resume(s).
- ☐ Create an elevator speech and start networking.
  - Learn more about what an “elevator speech” is and why it’s a major facet of networking.
    - [WSC training](#)
    - LinkedIn Learning, [Delivering an Authentic Elevator Pitch](#)
  - Networking is the art of gathering contacts who may directly or indirectly help you in your chosen career path; consider current/former supervisors, school alumni groups, current/former professors, professional groups in the field you’re interested in, and LinkedIn. Check out [Professional Networking for Career Starters](#) to learn why networking shouldn’t be overlooked, and tips on doing it effectively.
  - Create a [LinkedIn account](#) and professional profile. Check out how to [Rock Your LinkedIn Profile](#).
- ☐ Research potential employers.
  - Use CareerOneStop’s nationwide [Business Finder](#) database to find employers who might be a good fit for you in terms of location, occupation and organizational mission and values.
  - [Employers of National Service](#) are organizations who recognize and value the skills and experience that national service participants can bring.
  - Glassdoor

- ☐ Start searching and applying to job openings.
  - Start with [our training session](#) on how to search and apply most effectively.
  - Sign up for free on [WorkSourceWA.com](#) to apply to job openings, and connect to employers via career fairs (in person and virtual) hosted by WorkSource.
  - Create profiles on [Indeed.com](#), [Careers.WA.gov](#), [USAJobs.gov](#) (federal), and [PublicServiceCareers.org](#).
  - Connect to [AmeriCorps Alums on LinkedIn](#).
- ☐ Create a list of references.
  - Check out these tips on [how to ask for a professional reference](#).
- ☐ Prepare for job interviews.
  - Start with [interview fundamentals and answering common interview questions](#).
  - Prepare to be asked to provide a pre-interview video.

## POST-SERVICE

- ☐ Complete your student loan interest accrual form (if applicable).
- ☐ Download your verification of service letter from [my.americorps.gov](#).
- ☐ Be sure to use your Education Award or research transfer your award within seven years of completing service.
- ☐ Explore [AmeriCorps alumni networks](#)
- ☐ Make sure to provide updated contact info to WSC and let us know if we can stay in touch during your member exit eval.
- ☐ Check out these additional resources:
  - Housing resources: [homesshareonline.org](#) - search for rental room options
  - Housing Authorities have apartment complexes, and offer lower rent costs for low-income individuals.
  - Food Support:
    - [Co-ops](#)
    - Neighborhood Farmers Markets (<https://seattlefarmersmarkets.org/>)
    - [Food banks](#)