



# Administrative Handbook

2018-2019

Year 25

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# *RARE AmeriCorps Program Description*

## **1.1 Brief Introduction to AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps was created by the national service initiative and signed into law by President Clinton in 1993. During the first year alone, 20,000 AmeriCorps members of all backgrounds changed their communities and earned education awards in return for their service. Now, AmeriCorps programs engage more than 80,000 individuals annually in community service. AmeriCorps is locally driven, offering resources to communities to design and implement their own solutions. The AmeriCorps National Service Network consists of over 350 different programs across the nation. While local control is central to AmeriCorps, national identity is essential as well. All AmeriCorps programs share common elements and goals. RARE members of AmeriCorps are participating both in a local program and in a national initiative.

The mission of AmeriCorps has four components: getting things done, strengthening communities, encouraging responsibility, and expanding opportunity. AmeriCorps provides service to address Americans' educational, public safety, human, and environmental needs. By achieving demonstrable results in meeting such needs, AmeriCorps members will secure a smarter, safer, and healthier future for the Americans they touch. Every AmeriCorps program sets ambitious but attainable objectives for getting things done, and in the end should be able to demonstrate the degree to which those objectives have been met. The work of AmeriCorps programs varies as much as America's needs do--including immunizing infants, tutoring teenagers, keeping schools safe, restoring natural resources, building houses for the homeless, and securing more independent lives for the elderly. Whatever the goal, all these efforts will get things done.

While we rightly celebrate the ways we differ, we also need to remember the values we share. AmeriCorps strengthens communities in two ways. First, it unites citizens from different backgrounds in improving our communities. AmeriCorps enables Americans of every race, region, religion, and income to come together, in a spirit of respect and cooperation, in order to meet the nation's needs. Second, AmeriCorps brings together diverse institutions in partnerships to get things done in communities. These partnerships can create bonds that transform communities--turning strangers into neighbors who combine their resources and find innovative solutions to stubborn problems.

AmeriCorps strengthens the spirit of citizenship. Through service, discussion of service, and education about service, AmeriCorps enables RARE AmeriCorps members to see themselves as problem-solvers, not problems; to become leaders, not just followers; and to act on their responsibilities, in addition to their rights. While strengthening their desire to serve, AmeriCorps gives RARE AmeriCorps members the tools to fulfill their responsibilities

throughout their lives, including communication and conflict resolution skills and an understanding of their communities.

During the term of service, every AmeriCorps program offers a basic stipend, health care benefits, and childcare if necessary. At the end of the term, the initiative helps those who have helped America by offering education awards of up to \$5,815 that can be used for college, graduate school, or vocational training, or to pay back student loans.

In addition to this financial assistance, the experience of AmeriCorps expands opportunity in vital ways, providing invaluable life and professional skills. RARE AmeriCorps members emerge knowing how to teach or to build, and they carry these skills through the rest of their lives.

The Corporation for National and Community Service acts as a partner with State Commissions and programs in order to carry out the AmeriCorps mission. The responsibilities of the Corporation include making grants, administering education awards, providing technical assistance, and ensuring that all programs share a common identity and theme. Responsibilities of State Commissions include establishing a state plan, selecting AmeriCorps programs for funding through the state allocation, and providing technical assistance to programs.

## **1.2 An Introduction to the Corporation for National and Community Service**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation) was created by the National and Community Service Trust Act, the legislation that President Clinton signed in 1993 to establish AmeriCorps. The Corporation merged the work and staff of two existing agencies of the Federal government: ACTION, responsible for the VISTA and Older Americans Volunteer Programs, and the Commission on National and Community Service, which administered a range of service programs.

AmeriCorps is not the only program that the Corporation runs. Programs supported by the Corporation vary in many ways, including the kinds of work performed, the organizations involved, and the individuals participating. There are three basic sets of Corporation initiatives:

- *Senior Corps* (includes the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and Retired Senior Volunteer programs) engages more than 500,000 older Americans in serving their communities. Through these programs, seniors share the experience and expertise of a lifetime with other Americans.
- *AmeriCorps* provides opportunities for Americans to make an ongoing, intensive commitment to service. This includes:
- *AmeriCorps State and National* is the broadest network of AmeriCorps programs. It provides financial support through grants to public and nonprofit

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organizations that sponsor service programs around the country, including hundreds of faith-based and other community organizations, higher education institutions, Indian tribes, and public agencies. These groups recruit and train AmeriCorps members to meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. The RARE AmeriCorps Program falls into this category.

- *AmeriCorps\*VISTA*, the thirty year-old program which places Americans in high need areas to work with community members, develop those members' capacity to help themselves, and provide needed community services; and
- *AmeriCorps\*NCCC*, the National Civilian Community Corps, which will involve 1,000 young people ages 18-24 in programs focused on environmental needs and located on downsized or under-utilized military bases.

While the Corporation headquarters are in Washington, DC, the Corporation maintains program offices in every state. In addition, State Commissions on National and Community Service or similar entities in each state have significant responsibilities for the Corporation's programs: administering two-thirds of AmeriCorps grants, preparing an application for the community-based Learn and Serve America programs, and developing a comprehensive state plan with a vision and strategy for expanding service opportunities. General information on AmeriCorps can be found in the Serve America Act Frequently Asked Questions website:

[www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09\\_0519\\_serveact\\_faq.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09_0519_serveact_faq.pdf)

## 1.3 Affiliation with AmeriCorps

All AmeriCorps programs, staff and members must affiliate themselves as part of the AmeriCorps National Service Network. All program and service site websites shall clearly state that they are an AmeriCorps recipient and shall prominently display the AmeriCorps logo. Members will wear appropriate AmeriCorps gear while in service and will display an AmeriCorps placard in their office.

All RARE AmeriCorps members should follow the RARE AmeriCorps Program style guide.

All external reports and publications at the program or host/placement site regarding work supported by this grant or created by AmeriCorps members must include the following disclaimer:

*"This material is based upon work supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) under AmeriCorps Grant No. \_\_\_\_.*

*Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, CNCS or AmeriCorps.*

## **1.4 Introduction to the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement**

The Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE) (formerly the CSC) is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of the IPRE is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the economic development and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning to the students involved.

Through the service-learning programs provided by the IPRE, students, including RARE AmeriCorps members, gain important service and professional experience by helping to solve community and regional development issues.

The lists below show the staff of the IPRE and its programs.

### **RARE AmeriCorps Program Staff**

Julie Foster	Grants Administrator	541-346-2878	<a href="mailto:jdfoster@uoregon.edu">jdfoster@uoregon.edu</a>
Megan Smith	RARE AmeriCorps Program Director and IPRE Co-Director	541-346-3881	<a href="mailto:smith@uoregon.edu">smith@uoregon.edu</a>
Titus Tomlinson	RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator	541-346-2879	<a href="mailto:titust@uoregon.edu">titust@uoregon.edu</a>
Aniko Drlik-Muehleck	RARE AmeriCorps Field Coordinator	541-286-5110	<a href="mailto:aniko@uoregon.edu">aniko@uoregon.edu</a>

### **Other IPRE Staff**

Josh Bruce	Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience (OPDR) Director		<a href="mailto:jdbruce@uoregon.edu">jdbruce@uoregon.edu</a>
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IPRE facilitates a collaboration of individuals who provide community development assistance to Oregon communities, watersheds, state agencies and non-profit organizations. Through its programs, the IPRE works to establish relationships and strengthen partnerships between faculty and students affiliated with the University of Oregon and community representatives, state and local agencies and private organizations. The IPRE provides the following five interrelated services:

- Community service coordination
- Technical assistance and training for communities
- Community problem solving
- Community development courses
- Connections with state and federal agencies

IPRE is currently administering four programs designed to serve the needs of communities in Oregon, and provide University of Oregon affiliated students with experiential, issue-focused service learning opportunities. The programs fall into two categories of delivery systems:

- On-campus
  - Team projects
  - Individual students
  - Exit projects
  - EDA University Center
- Off campus
  - RARE
  - Trainings

## **1.5 An Introduction to the RARE AmeriCorps Program**

The mission of the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps Program is to increase the capacity of rural communities to improve their economic, social, and environmental conditions, through the assistance of trained graduate-level RARE AmeriCorps members who live and serve in communities while gaining community building and leadership skills.

Qualified college graduates and graduate-level students who are selected as RARE AmeriCorps members assist communities and agencies in the development and implementation of plans for achieving a sustainable natural resource base and improving rural economic conditions.

RARE AmeriCorps members receive a stipend of \$1,600 per month and medical health insurance. In addition, at the completion of a minimum of 1,700 hours of service, RARE AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive an educational award of \$6,095.

Communities that complete an application for assistance and are able to provide a \$23,500 cash match will be considered as possible host communities. Host communities receive the following:

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- A full-time, live-in resource assistant who will provide a minimum of 1,700 hours over 11 months of community service;
- Support services of a team of seven planning/policy analysts; and
- Community site visits and evaluation by RARE staff.

RARE is administered through IPRE and has been in operation since 1994. During its first year, fifteen RARE AmeriCorps members were placed in thirteen rural communities. Each year since then we've had between 20 and 35 RARE AmeriCorps members serving rural Oregon, from Warrenton to Lakeview.

RARE AmeriCorps members have a variety of backgrounds and bring to their communities a wide range of experiences. In addition, RARE AmeriCorps members receive training in areas such as community involvement, outreach and communication, land use planning, grant writing, project management, technical writing, public speaking, and necessary computer skills.

RARE projects typically fall into seven broad categories:

- Community Planning
- Economic and Community Development
- Natural Resource Planning
- Main Street/Downtown Development
- Food Systems Planning
- Tourism Development
- Energy Systems

IPRE staff administers the RARE AmeriCorps Program, providing training, supervision and program administration for RARE AmeriCorps members. All IPRE staff members serve as training and support coordinators while two staff members are responsible for field coordination and administration. The RARE AmeriCorps Program Director and RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator are responsible for selection of RARE AmeriCorps members and host communities.

### **2.1 The Role of the RARE AmeriCorps member**

RARE AmeriCorps members have the unique opportunity to learn about and participate in community development by playing an active role in implementing projects at the local level. RARE AmeriCorps members will have an opportunity to experience life in rural resource-dependent communities that are undergoing an economic transition. Often these communities have developed strategic plans and identified community

development projects yet lack the staff to successfully implement these projects. In these communities, RARE AmeriCorps members can help bridge the gap between planning and implementation. By successfully completing project assignments, RARE AmeriCorps members not only provide an invaluable contribution to the community, but they also gain valuable knowledge and experience about community development and community service.

RARE AmeriCorps members also contribute to the overall strength of the RARE AmeriCorps Program. By sharing knowledge and experiences with other RARE AmeriCorps members and staff on a regular basis, members assist in the organization's growth and development. RARE AmeriCorps members have the unique opportunity to share their knowledge and benefit from professional expertise through fall training sessions, regional get-togethers, and periodic site visits. By sharing experiences, members will add to the depth of their knowledge of the issues facing Oregon's rural communities and will be able to assist other RARE AmeriCorps members by group problem-solving difficult project tasks or research challenges.

## **2.2 General Conditions of Participation**

### **A. Eligibility**

To participate in the RARE AmeriCorps Program, students, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and other interested persons must first complete the RARE application process. Applicants are asked to describe their experience in community development, commitment to service, and knowledge of community planning issues and other topics (such as knowledge of computer applications). RARE AmeriCorps members must have an undergraduate degree and be US citizens or lawful permanent residents. All applications will be reviewed by a committee of RARE staff. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance/non-acceptance in the program. Successful applicants will be placed in a pool of RARE AmeriCorps members to interview with communities.

### **B. RARE Placements**

Placement decisions occur primarily during August of each year, with RARE AmeriCorps members beginning service in their communities around September 1. In some cases, positions will be filled during other times of the year. RARE staff will make every effort to match the skills and interests of successful applicants with the position descriptions provided by participating communities, counties, or agencies. Applicants are required to interview with the interested community, county, or agency. The purpose of this interview is to determine if the RARE AmeriCorps member and the participating supervisor(s) from the host organization feel that the placement will benefit both parties.

# Member Benefits and Responsibilities

## C. Background Check

Information on the requirement for all RARE AmeriCorps members and funded staff to receive a background check has been changed and is no longer dependent on service with vulnerable populations. The law states the following:

### SEC. 189D, CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

(a) In General – Each entity selecting individuals to serve in a position in which the individuals receive a living allowance, stipend, national service educational award, or salary through a program receiving assistance under the national service laws, shall, subject to regulations and requirements established by the Corporation, conduct criminal history checks for such individuals. All RARE AmeriCorps members must have a criminal background check that consists of:

1. National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) – check performed before candidate is selected for service.
2. Check of CNCS approved criminal registries by name performed for the candidate's state of residence and the state where the individual will serve.
3. FBI fingerprint-based check, known as Criminal History Record Information (CHRI)
4. Registry check must go back as far as possible - not just 7 years.

All RARE AmeriCorps members must be accompanied by someone cleared for access when in contact with vulnerable populations at all times until results of all background checks are received.

A RARE AmeriCorps member may submit a written request for access to review records that pertain to the RARE AmeriCorps member and were created relative to the AmeriCorps grant. A written appeal of the background check findings can be made to the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director.

## D. Term of Service

To qualify for the benefits of the RARE AmeriCorps Program (described below) full-time RARE AmeriCorps members must complete a minimum of 1,700 hours of community service starting around September 1. Persons failing to fulfill the 1,700 hour requirement may forfeit all or a portion of the educational award of \$5,815.

## E. Types of Hours

RARE AmeriCorps member hours consist of service, professional development (training, conferences, on-line courses, etc.) and fundraising hours. Of the 1,700 hours RARE AmeriCorps members serve, up to 20% can be for professional

development (at trainings officially sponsored or sanctioned by the RARE AmeriCorps Program or host organizations) and up to 10% can be fundraising. A minimum of 70% must be service. This is tracked on weekly timesheets and in the RARE AmeriCorps Program and AmeriCorps databases.

**F. Professionalism**

RARE AmeriCorps members will be in the spotlight at many different levels throughout their service year. They are representing their sponsoring organization, the RARE AmeriCorps Program, the University of Oregon, AmeriCorps and, most importantly, themselves. Personal hygiene and appropriate language, dress and behavior are critical components of professionalism. RARE AmeriCorps members are expected to follow any dress code and standards of conduct of their sponsoring organization.

**G. Performance**

Each RARE AmeriCorps member's performance will be evaluated through weekly timesheets, service reports and, in greater depth, through quarterly assessments. Each quarter, the RARE AmeriCorps member will submit a brief quarterly service report detailing accomplishments and challenges. Copies of the service reports will be forwarded to the RARE office.

Each quarter, the RARE supervisor and the RARE AmeriCorps member will complete an assessment of the member's performance using a form provided by the RARE office. It is recommended that the RARE AmeriCorps member and RARE supervisor meet at least quarterly to review the written assessments. At this same time, the member and supervisor will review and update the work plan. Copies of the written assessments and the revised work plan will then be forwarded to the RARE office.

In the event that the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a generally unfavorable quarterly evaluation from the supervisor, the member will be required to meet with the supervisor and the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator to discuss steps to improve performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memo that will be shared and signed by all three parties.

If the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a second generally unfavorable evaluation, he or she will be required to meet with the participating supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator, and the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director to determine what actions need to be taken to improve performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memorandum that will be shared by all parties involved.

If the issues relating to unsatisfactory performance cannot be resolved at this meeting, the RARE AmeriCorps member may be suspended or terminated for cause by the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director.

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## H. Work plan

A work plan is required from each RARE AmeriCorps member within four weeks of beginning service. Members should plan to use the work plan matrix provided to them by the RARE AmeriCorps Program during Orientation.

The work plan serves as a clear outline of why, what, how and when the RARE AmeriCorps member is to perform duties and create products. The work plan also serves as an informal “contract” between the RARE AmeriCorps member and supervisor by providing the information needed to evaluate progress and accomplishments. The work plan should be constructed in detail for the first three months and should be reviewed and updated at quarterly intervals to make necessary adjustments. The work plan review and update should be done at the same time as the quarterly assessments.

## 2.3 Proscribed Conduct

RARE AmeriCorps members are expected to behave in a professional manner in the workplace at all times. RARE AmeriCorps members represent not only the organization they are placed with, but also the RARE AmeriCorps Program, the Community Service Center, the University of Oregon and AmeriCorps. Specific behaviors that are considered unacceptable to the RARE AmeriCorps Program are described below. If any RARE AmeriCorps member is found to have engaged in such conduct, they may be suspended or terminated by the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director as described in the RARE AmeriCorps member contract.

Proscribed conduct includes the following activities:

- A. Chronic truancy, insubordination, or consistent failure to follow the direction of participating supervisors or RARE staff;
- B. Obstruction or disruption of normal activities, including pedestrian or vehicular movement, while in the workplace;
- C. Possession or use of firearms, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or other dangerous weapons or instruments while in the workplace;
- D. Detention or physical abuse of any person or conduct intended to threaten bodily harm or endanger the health of any person in the workplace;
- E. Malicious damage, use, or misuse of property belonging to the participating city, county, or agency or belonging to any employee of the city, county, or agency;

- F. Refusal to comply with an order from authorized personnel of the participating city, county, or agency to leave city, county, or agency property because of conduct proscribed by this rule when such conduct constitutes a danger to the personal safety, property, or workplace activities on such premises;
- G. Unauthorized entry into or use of the facilities of the participating city, county, or agency to leave city, county, or agency, including buildings or grounds;
- H. Illegal use, possession, or distribution of drugs or controlled substances; and
- I. Inciting others to engage in any of the conduct or perform any of the acts described above.

A number of activities may be performed voluntarily by RARE AmeriCorps members while on their own personal time, but may not be performed by RARE AmeriCorps members in the course of their duties, at the request of program staff, or in a manner that would associate the activities with AmeriCorps, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Community Service Center, or the University of Oregon.

These activities include:

- A. Any effort to influence legislation, as prohibited under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 501(c));
- B. Organizing 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 any 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 in 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 proselytization;
- H. Providing a direct benefit to:
  - 1. A business organized for profit;

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2. A labor union;
  3. A partisan political organization;
  4. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent RARE AmeriCorps members from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken under their own initiative;
  5. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support these religious activities;
- I. Voter registration drives by AmeriCorps RARE members are an unacceptable service activity. In addition, Corporation funds may not be used to conduct a voter registration drive;
  - J. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services;
  - K. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the above activities on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.

### **2.4 Fundraising**

- A. Approved RARE AmeriCorps Member Activities.** RARE AmeriCorps members may raise funds directly in support of service activities that meet local, environmental, educational, public safety, homeland security or other human needs.

Examples of fundraising activities RARE AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers tutor children to read;
2. Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;

3. Securing support and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
4. Securing financial resources from the community to assist a faith-based or community-based organization in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through the members of the organization; and
5. Seeking a donation from alumni of a program for specific service projects being performed by current RARE AmeriCorps members.

**B. Prohibited RARE AmeriCorps Member Activities.** A RARE AmeriCorps member's service activities may not include the following:

1. Raising funds for their living allowance;
2. Raising funds for an organization's operating expenses or endowment;
3. Writing grant applications for AmeriCorps funding or for any other funding provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service with the exception that they can write for NCCC support;
4. Writing grant applications for funding provided by any other federal agencies.

## **2.5 Sexual Harassment**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program, the Community Service Center and the University of Oregon are committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct in the workplace and to providing all employees, students and RARE AmeriCorps members a service environment that is free from sexual harassment by staff, faculty, employees, students, contractors or volunteers. Sexual harassment includes harassment based on sexual orientation. Such behavior is considered unprofessional and a violation of the trust relationship between colleagues.

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement; or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for any employment or academic decision; or (3) the conduct is unwelcome and sufficiently severe or pervasive that it has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. (See OAR 571-003-0025 (1)(e)).

Each staff member, faculty, employee, supervisor, student, contractor or volunteer associated with the RARE AmeriCorps Program is ethically and legally obliged to refrain

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from sexual harassment in the workplace and in academic settings. All should understand what constitutes unacceptable conduct. RARE AmeriCorps Program staff will take immediate action to correct behavior or displays that may constitute sexual harassment.

RARE AmeriCorps members, IPRE staff or RARE supervisors are strictly forbidden from engaging in sexual harassment. RARE AmeriCorps members and IPRE staff who have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to suspension or termination. RARE supervisors who have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to the removal of the RARE AmeriCorps member assigned to them and/or a report to their organization regarding the sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment complaints often heighten feelings of distress and engender adversarial attitudes. Under these conditions any interaction between parties to a grievance may be perceived as retaliatory or motivated by ill will. University rules prohibit retaliatory actions against individuals in response to filing sexual harassment grievances or participating in any manner in an investigation under university administrative rules. A claim that a detrimental action is retaliatory is established by proof that: (1) the complaining party participated in any manner in a sexual harassment grievance or investigation; (2) retaliation occurred; and (3) there was a causal connection between participation in the grievance or investigation and the retaliation. (OAR 571-003-0025(9)).

Any staff member, faculty, employee, supervisor, student, contractor or volunteer who experiences or observes possible sexual harassment should immediately notify their supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director or the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator. If an individual is not comfortable notifying one of these people, they can contact the University of Oregon's Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity, 474 Oregon Hall, 541/346-2985.

### **2.6 Drug and Alcohol Policy**

All RARE AmeriCorps members agree to abide by the RARE AmeriCorps Program's Drug and Alcohol Policy, in accordance with the regulations of the Corporation for National and Community Service, as follows:

- The use, possession or sale of illegal drugs at any time during the year of service is a proscribed conduct.
- RARE AmeriCorps members who use, possess or sell illegal substances are subject to dismissal from the program.

- While acting in an official capacity as a RARE AmeriCorps member, the member will not
  - Consume alcoholic beverages; or
  - Be under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

## **2.7 Release from the Program**

RARE AmeriCorps members may be released from the program for two reasons: (1) for compelling personal circumstances, and (2) for cause.

Release from the program for compelling reasons will be made by the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director on a case-by-case basis. The director will determine the personal circumstances under which RARE AmeriCorps members will be released from a term of service. Examples of circumstances that might be considered are serious illness/injury to the RARE AmeriCorps member or death of an immediate member of the RARE AmeriCorps member's family.

RARE AmeriCorps members must request a leave for compelling reasons in writing. This request should provide detailed information about the situation and how it is affecting their ability to serve. Back up documentation, such a doctor's letter, legal records or other expert information should also be provided.

RARE AmeriCorps members will be released for cause if they (1) drop out without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances; (2) are found to have been engaged in a proscribed conduct as outlined in Section 2.3 of this manual and in the RARE AmeriCorps member contract; or (3) are convicted of a felony during a term of service.

Releasing a RARE AmeriCorps member for cause has several consequences: (1) the RARE AmeriCorps member may not receive any education award based on the time served in the program; (2) the RARE AmeriCorps member must disclose any previous release for cause if they reapply to this program or to another AmeriCorps program; and (3) if the RARE AmeriCorps member fails to disclose a previous release for cause, they are permanently disqualified for an education award even after successfully completing a term of service.

When a RARE AmeriCorps member is granted a release by the Program Director for compelling personal circumstances, the director may either (1) authorize a prorated education award (if the RARE AmeriCorps member has served at least 15 percent of their term of service) or (2) permit the RARE AmeriCorps member to temporarily suspend the term of service for up to two years.

If a RARE AmeriCorps member wants to leave the program, the director will decide whether the reasons for leaving justify either a prorated benefit or authorized time off. If

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a RARE AmeriCorps member has had their service suspended due to compelling personal circumstances, they may complete the term of service in a different program if the original program is unable to accommodate them.

If a RARE AmeriCorps member is officially charged with a violent felony (such as a rape or homicide) or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance during a term of service, they will be suspended without receiving a living allowance and without receiving credit for missed hours. They may resume service (and get the withheld living allowance and credit for missed service hours) if found not guilty or the charge is dismissed. If convicted, the RARE AmeriCorps member may resume service by demonstrating that they have enrolled in an approved drug or violent offender rehabilitation program. A RARE AmeriCorps member convicted of a second or third offense of possession of a controlled substance may resume services by demonstrating successful completion of a rehabilitation program. In addition, any individual released for cause who wishes to reapply to the program from which they were released or to any other AmeriCorps program is required to disclose the release to that program. Failure to disclose to an AmeriCorps program any history of having been released for cause from another AmeriCorps program will render an individual ineligible to receive the AmeriCorps educational award, whether or not that individual successfully completes the term of service.

Access to Records: RARE AmeriCorps members have the right to submit a written request to review their RARE AmeriCorps member files.

### **2.8 RARE AmeriCorps Program Grievance Procedures**

The purpose of this process is to resolve disputes involving RARE AmeriCorps members, labor unions, and any other interested individuals such as RARE AmeriCorps member applicants in a fair and expeditious manner. In general, disputes must pertain to service related issues such as a proposed service assignment or a mid-term or end-of-term evaluation, or a RARE AmeriCorps member's suspension or dismissal. A dispute also may concern an applicant protesting the reason s/he was not selected as a RARE AmeriCorps member; or a labor union's claim that a RARE AmeriCorps member is displacing its union member.

All RARE AmeriCorps members must file complaints in accordance with the following procedures.

#### **A. Pre-Complaint Process/Alternative Dispute Resolution**

In general, all aggrieved parties such as members, applicants, or any other interested parties should attempt to resolve any problems or disputes with the other party on a

one-to-one basis. The issues should be clearly stated and understood by both parties. If this process does not resolve the matter, the aggrieved party may request that the program provide an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process such as mediation or facilitation to resolve this dispute. ADR is available, but must be selected within 30 days of the filing of a grievance.

The alternative dispute process provided the aggrieved party by the program will be a review of the grievance by a neutral party, in this case the University of Oregon's Office of Conflict Resolution Services. The RARE AmeriCorps member and the supervising staff must prepare a written statement of the grievance. The Office of Conflict Resolution will review the written statements and interview the parties for additional information, and recommend an equitable resolution to the grievance. The neutral party must not have participated in any previous decisions concerning the issue in dispute. ADR is confidential, non-binding and informal.

At the initial session of ADR, the neutral party must provide written notice to the aggrieved party of their right to request a hearing. A decision on any such grievance shall be made not later than 60 days after the filing of the grievance. If the ADR process is used and the matter is not resolved within 60 calendar days from the date the alternative dispute resolution process began, the neutral party mediating or facilitating the process should notify the aggrieved party of their right to file a formal complaint. The neutral party, however, may not participate in the formal complaint process. In addition, no discussions of the pre-complaint process or ADR can be referred to or introduced into evidence in the formal complaint process including the arbitration hearing. At any time the aggrieved party may decline ADR and proceed directly to the hearing process.

#### **B. Formal Complaint Process**

While grievances may be filed no later than one year after the date of the alleged occurrence, except for a grievance that alleges fraud or criminal activity pursuant to 45 CFR § 2540.230, it is preferred that they be filed no later than 60 days after the date of the alleged occurrence. Allegations of fraud or criminal activity must be reported immediately to the Corporation for National and Community Service's Inspector General. If the grievance pertains to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, the RARE AmeriCorps member will be immediately notified in writing of their right to file a discrimination complaint with the Corporation's Equal Opportunity Office. (In general, the RARE AmeriCorps member has 180 days after the alleged discrimination to file a complaint with the Corporation.).

A RARE AmeriCorps member may request a grievance hearing without participating in ADR or, if ADR is selected, if it fails to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution. The RARE AmeriCorps member then may take the following steps toward a grievance hearing.

1. The RARE AmeriCorps member must notify the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director to discuss the complaint and put their complaint in writing setting

## *Member Benefits and Responsibilities*

- forth the facts of the situation, the program's policy or procedure involved, and ideas or suggestions for resolution of the problem. The Director must discuss the matter with the RARE AmeriCorps member and any other appropriate parties and reply in writing to the RARE AmeriCorps member's written complaint within ten working days after receiving it.
2. The Director or a designated neutral staff representative must meet with the aggrieved parties within five working days of receiving the appeal. This is a pre-hearing conference and is not a substitute for a hearing. At the pre-hearing conference, the Director will work with the parties to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution to make a hearing unnecessary or to narrow the issues to be decided at the hearing. The format of the pre-hearing conference is flexible, involving meetings with one party at a time and/or with both parties together.
  3. The hearing will be conducted by the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director, unless the Director was involved in any previous decisions concerning this issue. In that case, a neutral party will be designated. Within five working days of this hearing, the Director or their designated official will render a decision on the grievance and the necessary actions.

### **C. Binding Arbitration**

1. If the hearing decision is adverse to the aggrieved party who filed the grievance or if in 60 calendar days after filing of a grievance no decision has been reached, the filing party may submit the grievance to binding arbitration before a qualified arbitrator. The disputing parties will jointly select the arbitrator. The arbitrator must be independent of the disputing parties.
2. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator within 15 calendar days after receiving a request from one of the disputing parties, the Corporation for National and Community Service's Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") will appoint an arbitrator from a list of qualified arbitrators.
3. An arbitration proceeding must be held no later than 45 calendar days after the request for arbitration. If the arbitrator, however, is selected by the CEO, the proceeding must occur no later than 30 calendar days after the arbitrator's appointment.
4. The arbitrator must make a decision no later than 30 calendar days after the date the arbitration proceeding begins.

The cost of the arbitration proceeding must be divided evenly between the parties to the arbitration. If, however, the RARE AmeriCorps member prevails in the binding

arbitration proceeding, the program must pay the total cost of the proceeding and the prevailing party's attorney fees.

5. Remedies for grievances include, but are not limited to, reinstatement of a RARE AmeriCorps member wrongfully suspended or dismissed along with credit for service hours missed and back living allowances, and prohibition of a placement of a RARE AmeriCorps member.

A lawsuit to enforce arbitration awards may be brought in any Federal district court having jurisdiction over the parties without regard to the amount in controversy or the party's citizenship.

## **2.9 RARE AmeriCorps Member Benefits**

### **A. Living Allowance Payments**

RARE AmeriCorps members will be paid a living expense living allowance during their service commitment. RARE AmeriCorps members receive \$1,600 for each month they serve. RARE AmeriCorps members are required to serve for a minimum of 1,700 hours over 11 months. The living allowance is taxed by the IRS, and this includes FICA and state and federal withholding. All payroll checks are issued by the University's Payroll Department and can be directly deposited into most Oregon banks.

### **B. Right to Waive Living Allowance**

A RARE AmeriCorps member may waive all or part of the payment of a living allowance if they believe their public assistance may be lost or decreased because of the living allowance. Even if the living allowance is waived, the amount may be deemed available. A RARE AmeriCorps member who has waived the living allowance may revoke the waiver at any time and begin receiving the living allowance but may not receive any portion that accrued during the waiver period.

### **C. Health Care Benefits Policy**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program will provide health care insurance to those qualified members who are serving a 1700-hour full-time term and who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the member begins their term of service.

RARE AmeriCorps members who are already covered under another health insurance policy prior to enrollment as a RARE AmeriCorps service member may not qualify for the RARE provided health insurance. RARE AmeriCorps members who are not covered by another insurance plan prior to enrollment as a RARE AmeriCorps member must apply to the Oregon Health Plan, which provides stronger overall coverage than the plan RARE provides. Members who do not qualify for the Oregon Health Plan must provide proof they were denied this coverage before they will be enrolled in the RARE AmeriCorps Program's sponsored plan.

## *Member Benefits and Responsibilities*

RARE will provide healthcare insurance to members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own. Members who lose coverage during their term of service must immediately contact the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director to get enrolled in the RARE provided plan, in order to assure the member is provided continuous ACA-compliant coverage throughout the member's service year.

Members who are covered under other insurance (either the Oregon Health Plan or another third party provider) will have to complete a waiver form and provide a copy of their ACA-approved proof of insurance, such as a health insurance card, before being allowed to deny or be taken off of the insurance provided by RARE.

The RARE provided insurance is through the Corps Network with medical coverage underwritten by CIGNA and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (D&D) underwritten by Gerber. Additional dental/vision insurance is not provided.

### **D. Child Care Benefits**

Child-care subsidies are available for qualified RARE AmeriCorps members with dependent children 13 years of age or younger. For more information about this benefit go to <http://www.americorpschildcare.com>

### **E. Workers' Compensation Insurance**

RARE provides Workers' Compensation Insurance to all RARE AmeriCorps members. Workers' Compensation Insurance covers on-the-job injuries. If a RARE AmeriCorps member has an accident or injury while serving or if a physician diagnoses a medical condition as service related, the RARE AmeriCorps member must notify the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director immediately. After the initial verbal report, the RARE AmeriCorps member must complete a Workers' Compensation claim within 48 hours of the incident or visit to the physician.

### **F. Unemployment Insurance**

Per Oregon statute, AmeriCorps members are considered volunteers, not employees, serving a fixed term of service. Therefore, RARE AmeriCorps members are not eligible for unemployment benefits at the conclusion of their service. (ORS 657.067)

### **G. Segal AmeriCorps Educational Awards**

After RARE AmeriCorps members have completed their service and final paperwork (AmeriCorps End of Service form, End of Service Report, quarterly work plans, timesheets, supporting documents, and post-service survey), they are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (Educational Award) that can be used to pay for continuing education and to repay qualified student loans. The amount of the award is \$5,815 for

full-time RARE AmeriCorps members who have completed a minimum of 1,700 hours of service. See information on use of Educational Awards in Section 2.11.

#### **H. Loan Forbearance**

RARE AmeriCorps members are eligible to have the repayment of certain student loans postponed while they are earning an education award. This postponement, called forbearance, is not automatic. RARE AmeriCorps members must request forbearance from loan holders using the National Trust/AmeriCorps online payment system: [www.AmeriCorps.gov/for\\_individuals/online/index.asp](http://www.AmeriCorps.gov/for_individuals/online/index.asp). Once enrolled, RARE AmeriCorps members will be able to set up an account in the online payment system and via this account, will be able to request forbearance from qualified lenders. The lender grants the forbearance; neither the RARE AmeriCorps Program nor the National Service Trust can grant forbearance.

#### **I. Interest Payment**

The National Service Trust will pay the total interest accrued on certain loans during the time of the RARE AmeriCorps member's service. An Interest Accrual Form must be completed at the end of the term of service. The Trust will pay interest only for loans that are qualified and have been placed in forbearance.

#### **J. College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2008 (CCRAA)**

CCRAA may offer RARE AmeriCorps members significant benefits. The Act has two provisions with implications for RARE AmeriCorps members: the Income-Based Repayment Plan (IBR) and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

The IBR Plan will make it easier for RARE AmeriCorps members to pay back student loans while serving. RARE AmeriCorps members who meet IBR's debt-to-income ratio threshold specified in the CCRAA will be able to make payments as low as \$0 a month while serving in AmeriCorps.

CCRAA information can be found on the following agency websites which provide helpful information in learning more about IBT and Public Service Loan Forgiveness: **Department of Education, Equal Justice Works, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, FinAid.org, EdFund.org, Federal Student Aid, IBR Info, Student Loan Borrower Assistance.**

Particularly relevant information for RARE AmeriCorps members can be found here: <http://thenewservice.wordpress.com/2009/04/14/ccra200>.

#### **K. Holiday, Vacation and Sick Leave**

Because RARE AmeriCorps members commit to a certain number of hours of service, they do not accrue any leave. Rather, if they are not serving due to a holiday, illness or personal vacation, they are not accruing hours towards their commitment. No hours are

## *Member Benefits and Responsibilities*

given for federal or state holidays. If a RARE AmeriCorps member is sick and unable to serve on a particular day, they should notify their local supervisor.

Vacations should be discussed with the local supervisor to ensure that scheduled vacations do not interfere with critical days for projects. RARE AmeriCorps members can take vacation days as long as they are still able to complete their 1,700 hours within eleven months.

### **L. Family Medical Leave**

At the program's discretion, temporary leave may also be authorized for the reasons allowed under FMLA to RARE AmeriCorps members who do not otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for FMLA leave as described in the regulations. If temporary leave is appropriate, grantees have the flexibility to determine the duration of the absence for up to 12 weeks, and may choose to continue providing health benefits to the RARE AmeriCorps member during the period of absence. The RARE AmeriCorps member must be suspended during the period of temporary leave.

The length of the leave must be based on two considerations: (1) the circumstances of the situation; and (2) the impact of the absence on the RARE AmeriCorps member's service experience and on the overall program. If the disruption would seriously compromise the RARE AmeriCorps member's service experience or the quality of the program as a whole, then the grantee may offer the RARE AmeriCorps member the option of rejoining the program in the next class or completely withdrawing from the program.

### **M. Jury Duty**

RARE AmeriCorps members who are called for jury duty should serve on the jury. RARE AmeriCorps members shall not be penalized and should continue to receive credit for the service hours, living allowance, health care, etc., regardless of incidental expenses paid from the court.

### **N. Impact of RARE AmeriCorps Member Benefits**

The RARE AmeriCorps member is responsible for the impact that benefits received from the RARE AmeriCorps Program (including living allowance, health insurance, educational award, loan deferment and interest accrual) may have on work study and other student assistance; AFDC, Food Stamps and other need-based programs; state and federal income tax; health insurance from a separate provider; and child care subsidies.

### **O. Training**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program will provide trainings in the fall. The topics of these trainings will vary depending on the members and the projects for each year, but will

generally include: citizen involvement, facilitation, grant writing, volunteer management, Oregon government and public presentations, among others. RARE AmeriCorps will cover the costs of these trainings. The RARE AmeriCorps Program will also work with its partner organizations to identify training/conference opportunities that may benefit RARE AmeriCorps members and, to the extent possible, negotiate a reduced rate.

#### **P. Armed Forces Reserves**

Generally, the Reserves of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard require reservists to serve one weekend a month plus 12 to 15 days a year (hereafter referred to as the two-week active duty service). To the extent possible, we seek to minimize the disruption in AmeriCorps service as a result of discharging responsibilities related to reservist duties. If RARE AmeriCorps members have a choice of when to fulfill their annual two-week active duty requirement, they should do so when it will not disrupt their AmeriCorps service.

In instances where the dates of active duty are inflexible and conflict with AmeriCorps service, RARE AmeriCorps members will be granted a leave of absence for the two-week period of active duty service in the Reserves.

RARE AmeriCorps members may not receive time-off for additional Reserves-related service beyond the two-week active duty service. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves. We will credit RARE AmeriCorps members for service hours during their two weeks of active duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps term of service. The RARE AmeriCorps member would receive credit for the number of hours he or she would have served during that period had there been no interruption. For example, if a full-time RARE AmeriCorps member is signed up to serve 30 hours of AmeriCorps service one week and 40 hours of AmeriCorps service on the following week, she or he would receive 70 hours of AmeriCorps service credit for the two weeks of active duty service regardless of the actual number of hours served in the Reserves.

Reservists in the U.S. Armed Forces receive compensation for their mandatory two weeks of active duty service. The compensation regulations governing the Army and Air National Guard may vary by state. We will continue to pay the living allowance and provide health care and child care coverage for the two-week period of active duty.

#### **Q. Voting**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program encourages all eligible RARE AmeriCorps members to register and vote. However, the grantee is prohibited from requiring RARE AmeriCorps members to register or to vote, and from attempting to influence how RARE AmeriCorps members vote. RARE AmeriCorps members who are unable to vote before or after service hours should be allowed to do so during their service time without incurring any penalties. The site supervisor should determine the length of absence.

# Member Benefits and Responsibilities

## **R. Nondiscrimination**

It is against the law for organizations that receive federal financial assistance from the Corporation for National and Community Service to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, age, political affiliation, or in most cases, religion. It is also unlawful to retaliate against any person who, or organization that, files a complaint about such discrimination. In addition to filing a complaint with local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, AmeriCorps members may bring a complaint to the attention of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

If a RARE AmeriCorps members believe that they or others have been discriminated against, or if they want more information they should contact: Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness/CNCS/ 1201 New York Ave. NW Washington, DC 20525 or eo@cns.gov

## **S. Civil Rights and Non Harassment Policy**

As with all federal grant programs, the RARE AmeriCorps Program will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or receiving service from RARE AmeriCorps members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. More information on the 2010 Civil Rights and Non-Harassment Policy: [www.AmeriCorps.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/eo\\_requirements.asp#civil%20rights](http://www.AmeriCorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/eo_requirements.asp#civil%20rights)

## **T. Support Services**

IPRE staff and faculty offer RARE AmeriCorps members a number of position-related support services. The IPRE/RARE staff has considerable experience in designing and implementing projects and conducting research, and are available to provide assistance to RARE AmeriCorps members and their host communities. RARE has also compiled an extensive library of community development documents and computer files that can be accessed by RARE AmeriCorps members. A list of the resources in the library is available from the Program Coordinator at 541-346-2879 or rare@uoregon.edu

All RARE AmeriCorps members will receive an email address through the University of Oregon's (uoregon) computer network. This account provides them with access to the University of Oregon's library system.

Section 7 of this manual provides information on resources available through RARE, the IPRE, the University of Oregon and other sources. RARE AmeriCorps members will be able to access an array of online resources through their workplace via a modem or network connection. A local server may also be utilized.

## **U. Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation is a logical adjustment made to a service environment to enable a person with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Disabilities affect people differently and an accommodation that is successful for one person may not be appropriate for another, despite their having the same disability. Once in service, a RARE AmeriCorps member may disclose a disability or make a request for a reasonable accommodation at any time by contacting the Program Director, Megan Smith, at 541-346-3881 or (smith@uoregon.edu).

The RARE AmeriCorps Program is committed to working with and supporting diverse RARE AmeriCorps members throughout their service placement. As part of this commitment, we will work closely with our community placement organizations to provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of our RARE AmeriCorps members. If a member believes that they need accommodation to complete the essential functions of their position, they should contact RARE Program staff as soon as possible so staff can work to support them. It is always up to the RARE AmeriCorps member who discloses to decide how much information to share about a disability. If a RARE AmeriCorps member discloses a disability, that information must be/will be maintained confidentially and cannot be disclosed to others unless the RARE AmeriCorps member provides approval in writing or in another verifiable method.

## **2.10 RARE AmeriCorps Accounting**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program provides reimbursements for some out-of-pocket expenses. These expenses include: mileage expenses for travel to RARE AmeriCorps Program meetings or trainings, meal expenses associated with RARE AmeriCorps Program meetings or trainings, and other expenses deemed appropriate by the Program Director. To be reimbursed for these expenses, the RARE AmeriCorps member must complete and forward a reimbursement form to RARE staff. Reimbursement worksheets as well as the program's reimbursement policy are found in Section 6 of this document. The RARE AmeriCorps Program does not reimburse RARE AmeriCorps members for living expenses (rent, food, utilities, etc.). These expenses should be met with the monthly living allowance that is provided. Under no circumstances will any reimbursements for alcoholic beverages be approved.

Office supplies such as printer paper, printer cartridges, writing instruments, report binding and printing, and other similar expenses that are typically associated with the normal execution of duties are the community's responsibility. However, if disagreement arises over any of these issues, the RARE AmeriCorps member should contact RARE staff for help resolving these issues.

It is the RARE AmeriCorps member's responsibility to have a current home address and phone number on file at the RARE office to ensure timely receipt of payments.

# Member Benefits and Responsibilities

## 2.11 Description of Education Award

### Number of Education Awards

A RARE AmeriCorps member may serve up to four terms of service in AmeriCorps State and National regardless of type of term. However, a RARE AmeriCorps member may only receive the value of two full-time education awards.

A program may use funds from the Corporation for member support costs for a RARE AmeriCorps member who has already received the value of two full-time education awards if the member has not yet served four terms total.

A program may not use funds from the Corporation for RARE AmeriCorps member support costs for a member who has already served the maximum number of terms for that stream of service.

AmeriCorps State and National – 4 terms

VISTA – 3 terms

NCCC – 2 terms

### Use of Education Award

RARE AmeriCorps members who have received the value of two full-time education awards are eligible for forbearance during their service terms and to have their accrued interest paid after successfully completing their service.

The education award can be used in the following ways, or in a combination of the following ways:

- To repay qualified student loans.
- To pay all or part of the current education expenses to attend a qualified institution of higher education (including certain vocational programs).

Beginning with terms of service that start on or after Oct. 1, 2009, the education award may be used to pay expenses incurred in enrolling in an educational institution or training establishment that is approved under the GI Bill.

A RARE AmeriCorps member may use the education award up to seven years after their last day of service. A RARE AmeriCorps member may apply for an extension if:

- They are unable to use the award for some reason during that time that is outside of their control such as a serious illness; or

- They enroll in another term of service in an approved program.

To be considered for an extension, a RARE AmeriCorps member **must** apply for an extension before the end of the seven year period.

The Department of Education has defined the term "costs of attendance" to mean tuition, normal fees, and required material, equipment, and supplies. In addition, each educational institution establishes allowances for room and board, books, supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses, which are also included in the cost of attendance.

RARE AmeriCorps members may attend an institution of higher education (including certain vocational programs) as defined in section 481(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1088(a)) and which has a Title IV Program Participation Agreement with the U.S. Department of Higher Education.

This includes most institutions of higher education (including graduate and professional programs), as well as some vocational schools. If in doubt, RARE AmeriCorps members should check with the institution prior to making definite plans. The institution's financial aid office will know if they meet this requirement.

The award can be used to help pay one or more loans or the costs of attendance at one or more educational institutions, or a combination. Qualified loans are loans backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (except PLUS Loans to parents of students) or under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

Many post-secondary institutions offer educational opportunities abroad. As long as the institution itself is in the U.S. and meets the legal requirements listed above, an AmeriCorps member may use the education award to study overseas. Foreign schools, however, do not meet the Higher Education Act criteria.

RARE AmeriCorps members can divide up the award and use it any way they wish, so long as it is for authorized educational expenditures. For example, a portion of the award could be applied to existing qualified student loans and the remainder could be saved to pay for authorized college costs at a later date.

The education award will not be taken into account in determining eligibility for any Federal student aid. The Corporation has no jurisdiction over whether State or private universities--or private scholarship funds--will take it into account in determining eligibility for institutional aid; however, the Corporation has requested that institutions not do so.

**The awards are provided from a special account in the United States Treasury called the National Service Trust. This Trust is managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which is the parent organization for AmeriCorps programs.**

## *Member Benefits and Responsibilities*

When RARE AmeriCorps members complete their term of service, RARE staff will notify the Trust that they have successfully completed the program. From this point forward, a RARE AmeriCorps member may choose to have all or portions of their educational award paid to an institution or lender via the AmeriCorps online payment system, called The Portal: [http://www.AmeriCorps.gov/for\\_individuals/online/index.asp](http://www.AmeriCorps.gov/for_individuals/online/index.asp)

Once a payment has been requested and approved via this system, payments will be made directly to the school or loan holder. When payments are made, the Corporation will inform RARE AmeriCorps members of the amounts and the balance in their account. For information on the status of their educational award after completion of their term of service), AmeriCorps members should visit the online payment system.

RARE AmeriCorps members should receive a letter from the Corporation confirming their education award within 20 days of completing their service. Because the letter will automatically be sent to the permanent address that RARE AmeriCorps members furnish when completing exit paperwork, it is important to keep this address updated.

Once the member's term of service is successfully completed, the Trust may be able to pay the interest that accrued on their student loans while they were serving. Since these are benefits above and beyond the education award, interest payments will not be deducted from the amount of the award. This payment of student loan interest is subject to taxation per federal law.

Unless RARE AmeriCorps members are released from service for compelling personal circumstances, the Trust cannot pay any interest accrued during the period if they do not complete their full term of service. Exceptions will be made for RARE AmeriCorps members who fail to complete their term of service for compelling personal circumstances. Although generally interest will not be paid by the Trust if RARE AmeriCorps members do not complete a full term of service, it may be possible under other authorities. RARE AmeriCorps members should check with their lender to determine whether their student loan qualifies for another type of deferment.

### *Taxability of Educational Award*

The education award is taxed in the year it is used. For example, if a RARE AmeriCorps member uses all or part of the education award for college in the fall of 2020, that RARE AmeriCorps member must pay taxes on the portion of the award used when they file 2020 taxes. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) does not withhold taxes from the award. By the end of January each year, the Corporation sends a 1099 form to all AmeriCorps members who have made payments from their education award.

### *Transferability of Educational Award*

To transfer an education award an AmeriCorps member must: (1) have earned the award in an AmeriCorps State or National program; (2) have been aged 55 or older on the date you began the approved term of service; and (3) have begun the term of service on or after October 1, 2009. If they meet all three of these criteria, the AmeriCorps member may transfer all or a portion of their unused education award. Once transferred, the AmeriCorps member may revoke any unused amount prior to the expiration of the award. An AmeriCorps member can only transfer each award once. They may transfer the award to their child, grandchild or foster child. The recipient to whom they transfer the award can use the award to pay the cost of attendance at qualified institutions of higher learning or to pay qualified student loans. The recipient can receive transfers from multiple education awards but only up to the current value of two full-time education awards.

## **2.12 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 persevere.

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

I'm an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.

# Supervision and Management

## 3.1 The Role of the RARE Supervisor

Supervisors in the RARE AmeriCorps Program have the unique opportunity to play an active role in the growth and development of tomorrow's leaders while at the same time helping their community to successfully achieve its goals. RARE supervisors introduce their RARE AmeriCorps members to the world of community planning, natural resource management and public policy. Additionally, RARE AmeriCorps members can explore life and serve in rural resource-dependent communities that are undergoing an economic transition. RARE supervisors can help their RARE AmeriCorps members gain valuable knowledge and experience while providing much needed professional level community service.

RARE supervisors can also contribute to other rural communities in Oregon by meeting and interacting with other RARE supervisors and community leaders. Many rural communities in Oregon are facing the same challenges. By learning about what actions other communities are taking to solve their problems, and sharing their own experiences with other RARE supervisors, RARE communities will gain additional skills and tools that can help them with difficult issues and projects.

## 3.2 Supervision and Management

While providing community service to rural areas, RARE AmeriCorps members will be supervised by one employee or board member of the participating city, county, or agency (client). The supervisor will make assignments, establish priorities, and otherwise specify community service activities desired by the client group.

Accomplishing tasks requested by the host community (client) is the responsibility of the RARE AmeriCorps member. Technical support will be provided as needed by the IPRE/RARE staff.

Prior to the placement of RARE AmeriCorps members, communities provide a position description and a list of potential projects to be completed by the RARE AmeriCorps member. Within four weeks after beginning service, the RARE AmeriCorps member is to develop a work plan for their year of service in cooperation with their supervisor. Work plans must be approved by the supervisor and forwarded to the RARE Office.

RARE AmeriCorps members serve on a day-to-day basis with their participating supervisors. RARE AmeriCorps members serve hours that coincide with the supervising organization's work schedule. Supervisors maintain regular contact with RARE staff to discuss their RARE AmeriCorps member's service progress, including but not limited to, changes in the work plan, problem solving, technical solutions, etc.

*RARE AmeriCorps members are not allowed under any circumstances to fill in for an absent employee of the participating city, county, or agency. By law, RARE AmeriCorps*

*members may not perform services, duties, or activities that were assigned to an employee. RARE AmeriCorps members may not be used in a way that will displace an employee or position or infringe on an employee's promotional opportunities.*

### **A. Performance Evaluation**

Each RARE AmeriCorps member's performance will be evaluated through weekly timesheets, service reports and, in greater depth, through quarterly assessments. Each quarter, the RARE AmeriCorps member will submit a brief service report detailing accomplishments and challenges. Copies of the service reports will be forwarded to the RARE office.

Each quarter, the RARE supervisor and the RARE AmeriCorps member will complete an assessment of the member's performance to date using a form provided by RARE staff. It is recommended that the RARE AmeriCorps member and supervisor meet at least quarterly to review the written assessments. At this same time, the RARE AmeriCorps member and supervisor will review and update the work plan. Copies of the written assessments and the revised work plan will then be forwarded to the RARE office.

In the event that the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a generally unfavorable quarterly evaluation from the supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps member will be required to meet with the supervisor and the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator to discuss steps to improve service performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memorandum that will be shared and signed by all three parties.

If the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a second generally unfavorable evaluation, he or she will be required to meet with the participating supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator, and the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director to determine what actions need to be taken to improve performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memorandum that will be shared by all parties involved. If the issues relating to unsatisfactory performance cannot be resolved at this meeting, the RARE AmeriCorps member may be suspended or terminated for cause by the Program Director.

### **B. Timekeeping**

RARE AmeriCorps members are asked to keep accurate records of the time spent during their term of service in their RARE community. RARE AmeriCorps members are required to identify the time spent on various projects and their tasks on their weekly timesheets. The RARE AmeriCorps Program plans to continue using a web-based time-tracking system in this 2018-19 service year. After the RARE AmeriCorps member fills out the timesheets, they are made available to the community supervisor for review and approval. The RARE AmeriCorps member is required to assure that their timesheets are reviewed and approved by their supervisor by no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, e.g., October timesheets must be approved by November 10.

## *Supervision and Management*

If a supervisor would like the RARE AmeriCorps member to keep timesheet records with the organization as well, they will need to arrange that with the RARE AmeriCorps member.

### **C. Work plan**

A work plan is required to be submitted by each RARE AmeriCorps member to the RARE office within four weeks of beginning service. The work plan serves as a clear outline of why, what, how and when the RARE AmeriCorps member is to perform duties and create products. The plan also serves as an informal “contract” between the RARE AmeriCorps member and supervisor by providing the information needed to evaluate progress and accomplishments. The work plan should be constructed in detail for the first three months and should be reviewed and updated at quarterly intervals to make necessary adjustments. The work plan review and update should be done at the same time as the quarterly assessments. The RARE AmeriCorps member has received training on the content and format of a work plan.

The work plan should include, but not be limited to:

1. A goal statement that should be a clear response to the need.
2. A table showing tasks to get to the goal in one column and expected outcomes in the second column.
3. A simplified time line that shows when the tasks are expected to begin and end.

### **D. Safety Procedures**

Per the community contract signed by the sponsoring community, site supervisors will train RARE AmeriCorps members on local safety procedures and emergency preparedness particular to that sponsoring community. This includes but is not limited to what to do if a natural disaster affects the community, and how to handle emergency situations in the office or community where the RARE AmeriCorps member serves. RARE staff want to ensure that if faced with an emergency, the RARE AmeriCorps member has an awareness of what to do, who to call, and how to act. Ideally, as a result of this safety training a RARE AmeriCorps member will be able to be prepared to help their local community in case of an emergency or disaster. To document that each community has safety procedures and trains their RARE AmeriCorps member, a signed form that indicates the RARE AmeriCorps member has received training on safety must be completed and submitted to RARE. RARE staff will send this form out at the beginning of the RARE AmeriCorps member’s term of service.

### **E. Communications with RARE**

RARE community supervisors will receive at least quarterly communications from the RARE office, typically by email. Site visits will be performed by the RARE AmeriCorps Program staff as needed. During these site visits, it is expected that the supervisor and RARE staff will meet to discuss the placement.

### **3.3 Accounting and Expenses**

#### **A. Contracts and Billing**

Community contracts will be generated and signed prior to the RARE AmeriCorps member's placement in September. One signed copy of the contract is retained by the community; the second signed copy is returned to the RARE AmeriCorps Program office. One-quarter of the contract amount is due at the time the signed contract is returned.

Subsequent quarterly billings will be sent out in December, March, and June. Modified billing schedules may be negotiated if necessary. Contact the Community Service Center Grants Administrator for more information, or to set up an alternative billing schedule.

#### **B. RARE AmeriCorps Member Living Allowance (Stipend)**

The RARE AmeriCorps members in the RARE AmeriCorps Program provide rural community development assistance as a part of their educational training. The RARE AmeriCorps members are not employees of AmeriCorps, the community they serve, or the University of Oregon. They do, however, receive a living allowance through the University and are covered by Workers' Compensation. The living allowance is designed to cover the cost of living in rural areas. Liability insurance coverage is the responsibility of the hosting community and is usually covered by the organization's standard volunteer liability clause.

The University of Oregon transfers stipends directly to the RARE AmeriCorps member's bank account on the last working day of each month. RARE AmeriCorps members receive a stipend check for each month served of the 11 month, 1,700 hour term. RARE AmeriCorps members may also receive 11 months of medical insurance coverage.

#### **C. Training**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program provides reimbursements to RARE AmeriCorps members for costs associated with required RARE training sessions and meetings. These expenses include mileage expenses for travel, meals, and lodging.

Hours spent traveling and attending RARE sponsored training sessions and meetings or supervisor approved professional development are applied toward the 1,700 hours required to complete a term of service.

## *Supervision and Management*

According to the Corporation of National and Community Service regulations, RARE AmeriCorps members may spend up to 20% of their service hours in personal/professional development, including RARE trainings. To count towards the required 1,700 hours, trainings must be sanctioned by either the RARE AmeriCorps Program or the host organization.

### **D. Computers and Technical Equipment**

It is the responsibility of the host organization to provide suitable computer and other technical equipment required for the RARE AmeriCorps member to successfully complete the tasks assigned to them.

### **E. Office Supplies**

Office supplies such as printer paper, printer cartridges, writing instruments, report binding and printing, and other similar expenses that are typically associated with the normal execution of duties, are the community's responsibility.

### **F. Travel Expenses**

The community is responsible for reimbursing the RARE AmeriCorps member for travel costs associated with the normal execution of duties in accordance with the organization's own policies and procedures. These costs may include mileage, meals, and lodging.

## **3.4 Community Training and Technical Assistance**

Community Service Center staff and faculty offer RARE AmeriCorps members a number of position-related support services. The IPRE/RARE staff have considerable experience in designing and implementing projects and conducting research, and are available to provide assistance to RARE AmeriCorps members and their host communities.

# *Program Roles and Responsibilities*

## **4.1 The Role of the RARE AmeriCorps Program**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program Director and RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator work together to manage the day-to-day operations of the RARE AmeriCorps Program. They are responsible for contacting cities, counties, and agencies interested in hosting RARE AmeriCorps members and conducting interviews of those communities expressing interest. They also provide information for students and others interested in becoming RARE AmeriCorps members and conduct RARE AmeriCorps member interviews. RARE staff convenes review panels each year to review applications and select both community and RARE AmeriCorps member candidates for the year's placement process.

The Director and Coordinator are responsible for the design and delivery of RARE AmeriCorps member orientation and training sessions, supervising RARE placements, and coordinating research and technical assistance for RARE AmeriCorps members and communities. They are also responsible for maintaining RARE AmeriCorps member and community records, and contracting with a health insurance provider.

The Community Service Center Grants Administrator is responsible for maintaining and processing all community contracts and billing procedures. The grants administrator is also responsible for processing RARE AmeriCorps member living allowance dispersal.

## **4.2 Supervision and Management**

### **A. Performance Evaluation**

RARE staff will create and distribute quarterly service reports to RARE AmeriCorps members and quarterly assessments to both communities and RARE AmeriCorps members. RARE staff will evaluate results from both the monthly reports and the assessments and will follow up where necessary.

In the event that the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a generally unfavorable evaluation from the supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps member will be required to meet with the supervisor and the RARE staff to discuss steps to improve performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memorandum that will be shared and signed by all three parties.

If the RARE AmeriCorps member receives a second generally unfavorable evaluation, he or she will be required to meet with the participating supervisor, the RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator, and the RARE AmeriCorps Program Director to determine what actions need to be taken to improve performance. The results of this meeting will be summarized in a memorandum that will be shared and signed by all parties involved.

If the issues relating to unsatisfactory performance cannot be resolved at this meeting, the RARE AmeriCorps member may be suspended or terminated for cause by the Program Director.

**B. Timekeeping**

RARE AmeriCorps members are required to file timesheets with the RARE office during their term of service. The RARE AmeriCorps Program plans to continue using a web-based time-tracking system in this 2018-19 service year to serve this purpose. RARE staff will utilize this web-based system to track hours of service performed throughout the year.

When the RARE AmeriCorps member completes approximately 1,700 hours of service, the RARE staff will send the RARE AmeriCorps member an End of Service Packet to be filled out and returned to the RARE office once 1,700 hours have been completed.

**C. Work plan**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program Coordinator will confer, either on site or by telephone, with both the supervisor and RARE AmeriCorps member within the first weeks of service to lend assistance to the creation of the RARE AmeriCorps member's work plan. Work plans will be reviewed and updated quarterly by RARE AmeriCorps members, supervisors and RARE staff. Any major modifications to a work plan, e.g., replacing the revision of a comprehensive plan with the development of an economic development plan, must be approved by RARE staff.

**D. Communications with RARE AmeriCorps Members and Communities**

RARE AmeriCorps members and supervisors are encouraged to contact RARE staff at any time with questions, concerns, or requests for technical assistance.

RARE staff will update supervisors and RARE AmeriCorps members on a quarterly basis on the status of the RARE AmeriCorps members' hours and billing process. Also included with this update is the RARE AmeriCorps member assessment.

# *Program Roles and Responsibilities*

## **4.3 Training and Technical Assistance**

During their field-based community service, RARE AmeriCorps members receive training from IPRE staff who provide instruction and support on topics such as project management, group facilitation and Oregon government that prepare RARE AmeriCorps members for their service experience.

IPRE Staff provide technical assistance to RARE AmeriCorps members and communities that includes helping members design and manage projects in their host community, coordinating member activities (newsletters, conferences, etc.), and linking members to pertinent research information as well as Internet and other computer resources at the University of Oregon.

## **4.4 Accounting and Expenses**

### **Training Expenses**

During their term of service, RARE AmeriCorps members are required to attend all orientation and training sessions. The RARE AmeriCorps Program covers the costs associated with these trainings, e.g., training manuals and materials, lodging, meals, and travel costs.

RARE supervisors are required to attend an orientation at the beginning of the RARE AmeriCorps member's term of service. This orientation will take place in the form of a conference call.

## **4.5 Safety Procedures**

This emergency plan is designed to ensure that in the case of an emergency, clear communication can take place and assistance will be provided. Emergencies, for the purposes of this plan, fall into two categories: a personal emergency involving an individual RARE AmeriCorps member, which can include personal injury, site-specific disaster (e.g., fire in home) or family emergency; and a community, state or national emergency. For each, different emergency procedures should be followed. These are described below.

### **Personal Emergency**

In the case of personal emergency, such as a personal injury, local disaster or family emergency that results in the RARE AmeriCorps member missing service time, the RARE AmeriCorps member should contact the Program Director immediately. If the RARE AmeriCorps member cannot contact the Program Director through the office number (either because the Program Director is not in the office or it is an evening,

weekend or holiday), the emergency numbers should be utilized. RARE AmeriCorps members should contact the Program Director for two reasons: (1) so the Program Director can arrange any assistance that is needed and (2) the Program Director can be sure that the supervisor is informed of the situation. The RARE AmeriCorps member may also choose to contact the supervisor directly.

If the supervisor is concerned about a RARE AmeriCorps member because that member has not shown up for service and has not contacted the supervisor, the supervisor should then contact the Program Director immediately. If the supervisor cannot contact the Program Director through the office number (either because the Program Director is not in the office or it is an evening, weekend or holiday), the emergency numbers should be utilized.

### **Community, State or National Emergency**

In the case of a community-wide, state or national emergency (natural or human-caused), affected RARE AmeriCorps members should contact the Program Director or Program Coordinator to inform them of their status. If the RARE AmeriCorps member cannot contact the Program Director or Program Coordinator through the office number (either because the Program Director or Program Coordinator is not in the office or it is an evening, weekend or holiday), their cell phone numbers should be utilized. RARE AmeriCorps members should contact the Program Director or Program Coordinator for two reasons: (1) so the program can arrange any assistance that is needed and (2) the program can be sure that the supervisor is informed of the situation. The RARE AmeriCorps member may also choose to contact the supervisor directly.

In the case of an emergency that causes communication lines within the state of Oregon to be disrupted, the RARE AmeriCorps member should contact the RARE AmeriCorps Program's out-of-state contact and inform the contact of the RARE AmeriCorps member's status.

#### **In State Contact:**

Megan Smith, Program Director 541-346-3881 (office) 541-914-9129 (cell)

#### **Out of State Contact:**

Karen Mauldin-Curtis, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, 309-298-2706 (office)

## *Timesheet Procedures*

RARE AmeriCorps members must use the OnCorps Reports Member Tracking System to record service hours worked. Members must input the prior month's timesheets by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month and the supervisor must review and approve them by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

OnCorps Reports is a secure, E-signature compliant system. It requires unique usernames and passwords. E-mails are used to notify users of needed actions.

### **Simple Steps**

1. Member submits timesheet.  
Time sheet is now locked, hours are "pending".
2. Supervisor(s) are notified by email and onscreen in OnCorps that timesheets require their attention.
3. Supervisor(s) approves or rejects w/comments.  
Approved timesheets are locked, rejected timesheets are unlocked for revisions.
4. If rejected, member is notified.
5. If rejected, member re-submits revised timesheet.
6. Once approved, hours are logged as APPROVED HOURS.

# Travel Reimbursement Policy

IPRE will reimburse RARE AmeriCorps members for expenses incurred while traveling for RARE AmeriCorps trainings and events. Any other types of travel reimbursement must be pre-authorized by RARE AmeriCorps staff to be eligible for reimbursement. Effective communication and adherence to these procedures will contribute to a speedy reimbursement of your out-of-pocket expenses.

As of spring 2018, the University of Oregon now uses a web-based system called Concur for travel purposes. RARE AmeriCorps members will log into the Concur site at **concur.uoregon.edu** which will require a log-in using a UO Duck ID and password which will be created at Orientation.

An introduction to Concur, manuals and training on how it is used by the UO can be found at <https://ba.uoregon.edu/content/travel>

## What Can Be Reimbursed?

### Transportation

When traveling to a RARE AmeriCorps training or event, in most cases, a RARE AmeriCorps member may use their own vehicle or carpool with other RARE AmeriCorps members. The vehicle owner will be reimbursed at the current State of Oregon mileage rate of \$.545 per mile. This rate is typically adjusted at the start of each calendar year. Miles are calculated from workplace city to destination city and return. A RARE AmeriCorps member will not be reimbursed for deviations from the most direct and commonly traveled route.

If a RARE AmeriCorps member feels they need to reserve a rental vehicle for RARE AmeriCorps business, contact a RARE AmeriCorps staff member, who will make a reservation and have the rental directly billed to IPRE. Reimbursement for rental car fuel requires the original sales receipts. Without original receipts, a member will forfeit their fuel reimbursement.

Other expenses such as air, train, bus, etc., may be reimbursed as long as these travel expenses are preauthorized by a RARE AmeriCorps staff member and original receipts are submitted.

### Meals

The RARE AmeriCorps Program typically provides meals during RARE AmeriCorps trainings or events, however, there are occasions when a RARE AmeriCorps member may find it necessary to incur the cost of one or more meals while in commute. Per University of Oregon policy, the member will be reimbursed for these meals, if they

qualify, at per diem rates (subject to change) once the trip concludes. Meal per diem rates are based on the city where the member spends the night, using the GSA rates which can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

Receipts are not required for reimbursement of meals. Lunch expenses on one-day trips are not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Lodging**

When attending an overnight RARE AmeriCorps training or event, lodging arrangements will be made on behalf of those RARE AmeriCorps members attending and will be directly billed to IPRE (room and tax only). Incidentals are not eligible for reimbursement.

Additional lodging is available for traveling RARE AmeriCorps members who cannot reasonably return to their homes between service shifts. RARE AmeriCorps members are asked to contact a RARE AmeriCorps staff member for assistance with making additional lodging reservations. Failure to do so could result in denial of reimbursement.

If, for any reason, it becomes necessary for a RARE AmeriCorps member to cancel a room reservation and/or make other lodging arrangements for any RARE AmeriCorps training or event, they must contact a RARE AmeriCorps staff member immediately in order to avoid being charged for empty rooms and/or late cancellation fees.

### **Other Expenses**

Other expenses related to RARE sponsored trainings and events, such as parking, supplies, technology, etc., may be reimbursed as long as these additional expenses are preauthorized by a RARE AmeriCorps staff member and original receipts are submitted.

The RARE AmeriCorps Program will not reimburse:

- Home to office travel
- Deviations from the most direct and usually traveled route unless justified
- Expenses incurred because the traveler was accompanied by a spouse or family members
- Tips/gratuity
- Laundry
- Interest on personal credit cards
- Mileage reimbursement on rented vehicles

# Travel Reimbursement Policy

## The Reimbursement Process

### Part 1: Pre-Trip Travel Request Form

In order to be reimbursed, RARE AmeriCorps members must complete a pre-trip request form in Concur. In most cases, a RARE AmeriCorps staff member will create a template for this request form and the RARE AmeriCorps member will just need to modify the form to meet their specific travel plan and then submit this request prior to traveling.

### Part 2: Post-Trip Travel Expense Report

Once the pre-trip request form is approved, it can be turned into a post-trip expense report. This reimbursement worksheet must be filed within 30 days from the day travel concludes. On this post-trip expense report, RARE AmeriCorps members should explain any oddities (e.g., travelled for RARE, then spent the weekend in Portland for personal reasons; carpooled one way with one person, then with another on the return home; traffic accident caused a detour of route requiring additional commute time).

RARE AmeriCorps members will upload any necessary receipts or additional documentation (e.g., training agendas) to the Concur travel expense report before submitting for review by RARE AmeriCorps staff. Should additional information or documentation be required, RARE staff will work with members to obtain and submit this information.

Once the expense report is completed and approved by RARE staff, it will be forwarded for review to the University of Oregon's Travel Office. When the Travel Office completes its review and approval, the document is submitted to the UO Accounts Payable Office for payment. Depending on the accounts payable choices made by the RARE AmeriCorps member when signing up for direct deposit in Duck Web, the reimbursement will be either direct deposited or a paper check will be mailed to the address on file.

If the RARE AmeriCorps member has any concerns about what is, or isn't, included on the final travel expense report, they should to contact Julie Foster at [jdfoster@uoregon.edu](mailto:jdfoster@uoregon.edu) before they submit the form.



# RARE AmeriCorps Resources

## Introduction

RARE AmeriCorps members have access to many resources. RARE Program staff understand that when a member first arrives in their individual community, it can be difficult to determine what resources will be needed, much less where to find them. This chapter will help the RARE AmeriCorps member to establish a starting point to identify the variety of resources available.

RARE AmeriCorps members often feel as though they are working on projects that no one has ever done before or on projects that are only relevant to their own communities. While these feelings may be valid in some cases, there is no doubt that someone has done something similar in the past and that they can learn a lot by looking at the plans, write-ups, and web pages that were created before them. The following resources are intended to help the RARE AmeriCorps member think about their own projects more clearly and will help them hit the ground running!

## University of Oregon Library System

Each RARE AmeriCorps member will be assigned a University of Oregon ID number that will allow them to retrieve an array of resources from the University of Oregon Library system.

Often times when starting a new project, it can be difficult to know where to begin. By researching the topic early on, the member will gain context, increase their own comfort level, and save time down the line when more information is needed.

The University of Oregon Library Web Page is: <http://library.uoregon.edu>. The website will allow access to the library from remote locations and has many resources that can be utilized. **Certain resources, such as accessing online journals, will require utilization of the University of Oregon's Virtual Private Network (VPN).** University of Oregon's VPN Software can be found here: <https://it.uoregon.edu/vpn>

## Books, Videos, Databases and More

To find any book, video, database, etc. in the University's library catalog, do a catalogue search directly from this main web page using the UO search box. The search results will determine if the resource is available through the UO library system, the Summit library catalogue or the Worldcat system (libraries worldwide). See "Distance Education Borrowing Services" below for more information on how to access these resources.

## Journals

There are several ways to search for journal articles. To browse by journal, click on “Search Articles” on the library’s homepage. To search by keyword(s) click on “LibrarySearch” on the library’s homepage. This will lead to resources to search journals by subject. **Please note that RARE AmeriCorps members must be logged on with the University of Oregon’s VPN in order to access journals from the University of Oregon Library.**

### **Summit: Orbis Cascade Academic Union Catalogue:**

Summit is a library catalog that combines information from Pacific Northwest academic libraries into a single unified database. Though searching the UO WorldCat system, Summit books will automatically result in your search. Books can be ordered off of Summit and will be delivered to the University of Oregon library within three to five working days. The limitation to using Orbis is that the books can only be checked out for a limited amount of time, usually three weeks with the option to renew for another three weeks. If a RARE AmeriCorps member wants a book ordered from Summit and would like to use the book remotely they need to consider the time limitations.

### **Distance Education Borrowing Services**

If a RARE AmeriCorps member is on campus or if their placement is less than 30 miles from campus, they will need to pick up any library resources in person. When they come to the UO library, they will need to provide their UO ID number and a photo ID in order to check out resources. If a RARE AmeriCorps member’s placement is more than 30 miles from campus, they can request that materials be sent to them using UO’s “distance education borrowing services” found at: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/distanceeducation/>. **Please review this website thoroughly as it covers the services available to offsite “students.”**

To use this service, the RARE AmeriCorps member will search for materials in the UO Library online catalogue. Once a source is identified, look at the complete record of the book. Click on the “Request Item/Place Hold” button, and then select the “Distance Ed” location in the drop-down box. Books that are currently checked out may also be recalled and then sent out (a recalled book may not be available for up to 2 weeks - if the member lives near an Orbis Cascade library they may want to consider finding an alternative copy of the book in Summit.) RARE AmeriCorps members will be responsible for the cost to mail the materials back to the UO before the due date. They will also be responsible for any late fees.

# RARE AmeriCorps Resources

## Available Software

Select software packages are licensed by the University of Oregon for use by UO students, faculty, staff and RARE AmeriCorps members. Packages are licensed for campus use. Some software allows use at home. More information about what software can be found on the following site: <https://it.uoregon.edu/software/list>

The University of Oregon's Information Services also provides the UO community with Duckware, a bundle of recommended software, free to university students, faculty, and staff. The Duckware bundle can be found at: <https://it.uoregon.edu/software/duckware>

RARE AmeriCorps members are encouraged to reach out to a RARE AmeriCorps staff member if they have any troubles accessing software. **Please note that a RARE AmeriCorps member must be logged on with their UO username and password in order to access software from the University of Oregon Library.**

## RARE Website – Program Resources Webpage

The RARE AmeriCorps Website includes a number of webpages dedicated to providing you and your host community access to resources. Included in the resources section of the RARE AmeriCorps Website are links to important websites; a catalogue for the RARE AmeriCorps Library; all handouts, forms presentations, etc. utilized throughout the service year; and, an online calendar with important dates to remember. RARE AmeriCorps members can access the Program Resources Webpage at: <https://rare.uoregon.edu/resources>

## RARE Reference Library

The RARE AmeriCorps Program also has a small library. The library is comprised of an array of books, reports, action plans and other documents that RARE AmeriCorps members have written in the past... It is a great resource to find examples of documents similar to what a member may be doing in the field. If a member is having trouble envisioning what their final product is going to look like or are looking for formatting insight, the RARE AmeriCorps Reference Library is the place to visit.

These materials can be checked out in person when the RARE AmeriCorps member is in Eugene or they can request items be sent to their home address. Simply send a request to RARE AmeriCorps via e-mail. A RARE AmeriCorps member can also request information from RARE AmeriCorps staff if what they are looking for is not in the RARE AmeriCorps Library. RARE staff will most likely have ideas about where a member can get some sample documents.

## **Community Service Center Staff Interests and Areas of Expertise**

Another valuable resource available to RARE AmeriCorps members is the IPRE staff. To determine which staff RARE AmeriCorps member has the area of expertise that is needed, it may be best to contact the Program Coordinator who will put the RARE AmeriCorps member in touch with the appropriate staff person. A full listing of the IPRE staff and their areas of interest can found at the following site: <http://IPRE.uoregon.edu/staff/>.

## **Talking Amongst Yourselves**

RARE AmeriCorps staff cannot stress this enough. RARE AmeriCorps members will all be given each other's e-mail addresses and phone numbers as well as being subscribed to the RARE AmeriCorps listserv. Members can mail questions, comments, thoughts, concerns, ideas, etc. to the listserv at [rare-list@lists.uoregon.edu](mailto:rare-list@lists.uoregon.edu).

Open communication is always important. A fellow RARE AmeriCorps member may be working on a similar project, with the same state agency, dealing with the same roadblock, etc. Ultimately, a fellow RARE AmeriCorps member may have information about people who are helpful or ideas that can help you get in touch with the right person. It is valuable to talk to each other. Even if a member thinks they are treading in water no one has ever treaded in before, they should look to the IPRE staff and other RARE AmeriCorps members as resources.

## **RARE AmeriCorps Monday Mailing**

Each Monday, RARE AmeriCorps members will receive a Monday mailing via the RARE AmeriCorps listserv. This mailing, put together by the Program Coordinator, is intended to pass along information on upcoming events, grant opportunities and resources. If members have any information they would like to share with others via the Monday Mailing, please forward it via email to the Program Coordinator.

## **RARE AmeriCorps Trainings**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program provides a number of trainings throughout the course of the service year. The RARE AmeriCorps Program provides reimbursements to RARE AmeriCorps members for costs associated with required RARE training sessions and meetings. These expenses include mileage expenses for travel, meals, and lodging.

# *RARE AmeriCorps Resources*

## **Topically Focused Trainings and Conferences**

The RARE AmeriCorps Program is often able to provide reduced cost or free access to a number of trainings specific to your focus area. If a RARE AmeriCorps member is interested in attending an additional training they should contact RARE Program staff to discuss.

RARE AmeriCorps members should never hesitate to ask their host site about attending trainings that are directly relevant to their line of work. For those working with Main Street Programs, the Annual Oregon Main Street Conference is a great one to ask about. For those in Food Systems Positions, they will most likely be attending Oregon State University's Small Farms Conference. The list goes on and on, and really, it never hurts to ask

## **RARE Alumni Network**

Nearly 500 individuals have successfully completed a year of service with the RARE AmeriCorps Program. These individuals have a wealth of knowledge regarding their focus area and about rural Oregon in general., RARE AmeriCorps members should contact the Program Coordinator who can determine which of our alumni has the area of expertise needed and put the member in touch with the appropriate individual.

## **RARE Resources Overview Session**

RARE AmeriCorps members should make sure to refer back to the RARE Resources Overview that was covered at RARE AmeriCorps Orientation for a detailed overview of additional resources available throughout their term of service.