

What's Next?

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Serving Your Country

Do you see yourself being a hero for your country? If so, you can become one in many ways. One way is to become a member of AmeriCorps. This is a civilian organization that provides many opportunities to serve while you are learning skills and earning money for college.

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma, and others, AmeriCorps is joining with local, state, and federal relief and recovery efforts to provide emergency assistance and long-term relief. For more information, go to: www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/katrina.asp.

If you want to have the experience of living with a cadre of young people who are also looking to do something for their country, AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Conservation Corp) may be the best choice for you. You will live dormitory style and be deployed to areas of the country where work is needed on projects that help communities.

For the more independent minded, AmeriCorps*Habitat sends team members to live in communities to build housing. AmeriCorps*Habitat helps them find housing while they build. It's best to talk with an actual member about any of the AmeriCorps options, so

- ◆ AmeriCorps*Habitat
- ◆ AmeriCorps*National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC)
- ◆ Peace & Social Justice Jobs
- ◆ Health Care Jobs

we've provided a phone number for you below.

Careers that promote peace and justice are numerous, too; we've listed some for you to think about.

And of course, being a hero is possible throughout your career if you choose to work in any of 80 different types of health care jobs that play a role in preventing and treating illness.

AmeriCorps*Habitat:

Learning Skills

Serving Your Country

Earning Money for College

You may have already heard of Habitat for Humanity but may not have known that Habitat, usually a volunteer organization, **hires 18-24 year old AmeriCorps workers** to help build housing for Habitat families. Habitat for Humanity builds and renovates sturdy homes for low-income families who provide a good part of the “sweat equity” themselves. Habitat is a Christian-based organization, but is open to anyone, regardless of his or her faith (www.habitat.org).

If this sounds like something you’d be interested in, check out these facts:

- AmeriCorps*Habitat is a **10 to 11 month residential program for 18-24 year olds** that helps provide **civilian service** to communities nationwide.
- You need **no prior construction experience**.
- Habitat is open to both **men and women**.
- A **high school degree is not required** but you’re encouraged to complete your GED.
- You’ll receive **training in CPR, First Aid, and workplace safety**.

Contact Information

Mailing address: AmeriCorps*Habitat, 121 Habitat Street, Americus, GA 31709

Telephone: 1(800) 422-4828, Ext. 2293

Fax: 1 (229) 924-2096

E-mail: americorps@hfhi.org

Website: www.habitat.org

- You'll be given a chance to **develop skills** as a community leader and construction supervisor.
- Habitat **pays for your travel** to the training site and the program site.
- Habitat **helps you make living arrangements**, usually with other Habitat/AmeriCorps workers.
- You'll receive a **living allowance of \$10,600**.
- You'll be eligible for a **\$4,725 educational allowance** at the end of service.
- **Health insurance** is included.
- Childcare may also be available, depending on the site, etc.

If you want to strike out on your own, but would rather have the **support of a known organization**, AmeriCorps*Habitat may be for you.

AmeriCorps*NCCC: Serving Your Country Away From Home

If service is one of your goals, the AmeriCorps*National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC) may be just the right choice. It allows you to serve your country, live away from home, and do so as a *civilian*. The NCCC arm of AmeriCorps is somewhat like our domestic Peace Corps. Its mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through national and community service.

Since 1994, over 10,000 18-24 year-olds have served over 15 million hours, providing disaster relief, building homes for low-income families, preserving the environment, tutoring children, and helping communities meet challenges. AmeriCorps*NCCC team members work with faith-based and other community-based organizations, such as national nonprofit organizations, schools, local municipalities, national and state parks, and Native American tribes.

What Does it Mean to Be an AmeriCorps*NCCC Team Member? (www.americorps.org/about/programs/index.asp)

AmeriCorps*NCCC is a full-time 10-month residential program. Its team-based approach is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the U.S. military. Members serve in teams of 10-12 and are assigned to projects throughout the region served by their campus. They are trained in CPR, first-aid, and mass care before deploying for their first service project. In addition, some members can attain certification in chainsaw operation and wildland firefighting.

Members receive lodging, meals, uniforms, health benefits, student-loan deferment, and a living allowance of about \$4,000. Upon successful completion of their term, members receive an education award of \$4,725 to help pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. AmeriCorps*NCCC members serve communities in every state, but live and train at five regional campuses: Charleston, SC; Denver, CO; Sacramento, CA; Perry Point, MD; and Washington, DC. Applicants cannot choose the location; campuses are assigned randomly. Get ready for adventure!

Eligibility Requirements

- **Age:** 18-24.
- **Gender:** Male or female.
- **Citizenship or residence:** Must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident.
- **Educational achievement:** HS diploma not required. Members develop an individual learning plan at the beginning of the year outlining their personal learning goals while in the program. NCCC staff will then help each member to develop a plan to achieve those personal learning goals, including getting a GED.
- **Income ceiling:** None.
- **Health exam:** Must complete a medical history for acceptance.
- **Drug test:** Yes—AmeriCorps*NCCC is a drug-free environment. Members are tested during the first week of reporting to the campus and randomly throughout the program year. Members who test positive for illegal drugs are dismissed from the program.
- **Criminal background: Can a person with a criminal background serve in the NCCC?** It depends on the offense. Those convicted of certain felonious criminal acts (e.g., acts of violence) would probably not be eligible for the program.

Other Requirements

Team Members are required to complete 1,700 hours of service, including 80 hours of independent service activities. Members work and live with a team of individuals from and within communities of diverse cultural, ethnic, economic, geographic, and educational backgrounds. So communication and team-playing are keys to success.

Team members must be able and willing to perform physical labor, sometimes in stressful environments and adverse weather conditions. And they must be willing to serve long hours beyond the eight-hour workday, deploy to any location in the region served by the campus, and deal with sudden and unexpected changes.

Term of Service

- **Length of term:** Ten months.
- **Term starting date(s):** Cycles start in the fall and the winter. The fall cycle campuses are in Charleston, Sacramento, and Washington, DC, and open in late September and early October. The winter cycle campuses are in Perry Point (Maryland) and Denver and open in January.
- **Application deadline(s):** The two deadline dates are March 15 for the fall cycle and July 15 for the winter cycle. However, members are encouraged to apply early because selection is continuous and classes may fill before the application deadline date.

- **Living arrangements:** Lodging with a group in a dormitory.
- **Food:** Yes.
- **Health benefits:** Yes. The medical benefits plan covers all injuries and/or illnesses suffered during service as well as most pharmacy needs. The plan does not cover medical care for pre-existing medical illnesses and/or injuries.
- **Travel expenses to and from program location:** AmeriCorps*NCCC will pay for your transportation to the campus from your home of record and back home when you have completed the program or whenever you leave the program permanently.
- **Cost or Stipend (educational grant or cash):** Members receive a living allowance of \$4,000 a year; upon successful completion of their term, members receive an education award of \$4,725 to help pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans.
- **Visitors allowed at program location:** Yes, parents and others can visit, but they cannot stay on the campus. They would have to stay in a hotel or with friends/family off-campus.
- **Trips away from program location; breaks and vacations:** Members who attend the fall cycle will have a winter break that starts at the end of the year just before Christmas and goes through the New Year. Members who attend the winter cycle will have a summer break around the 4th of July. Also, a long weekend (Friday and Monday off) falls sometime in April or May. Members will be off on certain other holidays such as Thanksgiving, Labor Day, and Memorial Day.
- **Other:** Up to \$400 per month for child care if necessary; member uniforms.

Contact Information:

- **Program name:** AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)
- **Principal program sponsor:** AmeriCorps
- **Telephone:** 1-800-731-0002
- **E-mail:** anccc@cns.gov
- **Website:** www.americorps.org/nccc/

Working for Peace & Social Justice*

If you want to serve your country and be a hero, many jobs are available that **build community and, in the process, serve all of us**. Any of the jobs listed below would serve your fellow Americans as well as making you feel good about yourself.

In most of these jobs, **“people skills”** are important. Enthusiasm, showing respect for others, being aware of others’ feelings, showing up, being on time, and having patience when things don’t go your way all help you succeed. Most important, your **dedication to using your life energy to make the world a better place** is the most important aspect of these jobs. (For more info, see **Project YANO** website cited below.)

Some **special training**, usually at a community college or four-year college, is required to get jobs in these fields. If a paid job is not available at the start, many of these careers provide **internships or volunteer opportunities**. Spending some time volunteering gives you a chance to see if these are areas you’d like to pursue. You can learn about the field and whether it’s a good fit for you, and you can show co-workers and supervisors what you can do. Who knows? A job offer may follow!

Examples of Peace and Social Justice Jobs (*From Project YANO, Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities, www.projectyano.org)

Job	What You Do	Skills You Need
ARTIST	Use art, cartoons, to address political and social issues	Natural ability; art training helps
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER	Work for agency trying to improve conditions for people: fair housing, anti-discrimination, job opportunities	Ability to work well with others; ability to get things done, knowledge of the issues
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL	Be a paramedic, or take training for 80+ health careers	Community college or advanced degree; patience and caring
LEGAL PROFESSIONAL	Be a lawyer, assist lawyers working on getting justice for their cases, work in legal aid services	Community college or more advanced degree
MEDIATOR	Help people, families, workers and neighbors resolve conflicts	Training in a dispute settlement organization, like Orange County or Durham Dispute Settlement Centers
POLITICAL CANVASSER/ INTERN	Circulate petitions to put issues on the ballot, door-to-door canvassing, work for a political candidate to help move social justice issues forward	Ability to work with the public and communicate clearly; positive attitude
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY - SALES INSTALLER CREATOR	Work for organizations promoting or producing or installing solar, wind, hydrogen, fuel cells, or other alternative energy source	Knowledge of the types of alternative energy sources; motivation to help move the U.S. away from fossil fuels.
TEACHER	Work for schools, organizations to build community, teach children the history and principles of peace	Education degree
UNION ORGANIZER	Work for better wages, healthier or fairer workplaces, or union formation	Organizing skills, knowledge of business

Health Care Jobs: Promising Careers in Service to Others

Health care offers it all: work that's exciting and on the cutting edge of science and technology; the opportunity to serve others; jobs that pay well and have excellent potential for advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 17 percent of all *new* jobs between now and 2010 will be in the health care industry. To fill these, 4.2 million workers will be needed. In North Carolina, jobs in health careers are plentiful.

Why so many jobs? An explosion of new knowledge and technologies for finding and treating disease, a growing elderly population requiring more services, and the rapid growth of alternative and complementary medicine are some of the factors that guarantee a doubling of these jobs in North Carolina by 2020.

Beyond Doctors and Nurses

And "health care jobs" aren't just nurses and doctors. About 80 different kinds of health care professionals work directly with people, or "behind the scenes." These include clinical research monitors or study managers, medical illustrators, phlebotomists, occupational therapists, dental hygienists, nursing assistants, health information technicians, radiation technologists, substance abuse counselors, respiratory care therapists, health care administrators, and many more.

Some medical careers involve protecting the environment and workers from toxic substances—such as occupational health and safety specialists or environmental health specialists who test water and soil or inspect restaurants and swimming pools.

Education and Training Requirements

As you might already know, many health care careers require some education past high school. Fortunately, many training programs in North Carolina are available for people interested in health careers.

Furthermore, North Carolina's educational system offers a number of support programs to prepare students for health career training. So even if

you didn't study much math and science in high school, the health career path is still open to you. Several community college programs offer math and science courses to prepare you better for a health career. Durham Community College even offers "Biotech Bootcamp" to sharpen your skills for taking the courses you'll need to succeed.

Where to Start?

The Area Health Education Centers (AHEC - www.nhealthcareers.com) might be your best starting place. AHEC's Health Careers Access Program (NC-HCAP) has the mission of increasing the number of individuals from minority and underserved backgrounds who are trained, educated, and employed in the health professions in North Carolina.

But regardless of your status, AHEC has the best health careers materials and website around, and they are happy to share. The North Carolina AHEC Careers Manual (<http://nc-hcap.unc.edu>) is terrific! It provides detailed information on academic preparation, work environments, and educational programs for 88 different health care professions. Go on-line, send an email, or call to get a paper copy of the manual for free. You can also find out about special AHEC programs in your local area by going onto the website or calling them (*see contact information below*).

HCAP Career Centers are located on four UNC campuses and are open to the public, regardless of your current educational background (high school student, pre-college, or some college). Staff can help you find resources for financial aid, find ways to strengthen your academic and basic skills background, and guide you in getting admitted to health professions schools.

Depending on where you live, AHEC provides different regional activities. For example, the Wake AHEC (Lee, Wake, Durham, Person, Granville, Vance, Franklin, Johnston, and Warren Counties) provides educational activities to increase awareness and interest in this field among students from elementary through high school and post-secondary education. The Health Careers Scholars Academy Program consists of a series of workshops to improve academic performance, increase awareness of health careers and health care issues, and provide SAT Prep courses, CPR and First Aid certification, and job shadowing opportunities. Other activities include college tours, recruitment fairs, a parent advisory council, the Summer Youth Enrichment Internship, and the Carolina Visions Health Careers Summer Camp. Again, check the website, or give them a call.

The Community Colleges are another important resource, since many of the Community Colleges have health career programs.

Information Sources for Health Care Jobs

Here is some of the contact information you'll need:

- **North Carolina Health Careers Access Program**
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
301 Pittsboro Street, Suite 351, CB# 8010
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8010
Phone: (919) 966-2264
FAX: (919) 966-6109
Email: nchcap@email.unc.edu
- **Elizabeth City State University**
Phone: (252) 335-3270
- **North Carolina Central University**
Phone: (919) 530-7128
- **The University of North Carolina - Pembroke**
(910) 521-6673

Gathering Additional Information

And here are some ways to get more information about health care career opportunities:

- **Talk to people working in a health profession. Ask them why they chose this field, what they do, and what they like and don't like about their jobs.**
- **Volunteer in a nursing home, doctor's office, or hospital.**
- **Read about health careers on the Internet or ask the reference librarian.**
- **Read publications in the field that interests you.**
- **Find out about events you can attend in the community and on local community college and university campuses.**
- **Take an introductory course in the field in which you're interested.**

