



/ Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Application Guide

February 13, 2019

/ Welcome

We are thrilled that you are interested in serving as an Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Member! You are applying to join a select group of law students who have served in communities throughout the United States. It is our aim to make the application process and ensuing term of service as simple and rewarding as possible—use this guide as a reference to create and submit your application.

Application Deadline: May 15, 2019

ABOUT EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS

The mission of Equal Justice Works is to create opportunities for lawyers to transform their passion for equal justice into a lifelong commitment to public service.

ABOUT THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The [Corporation for National and Community Service](https://www.nationalservice.gov/) (CNCS) is a U.S. federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps and grants funds to Equal Justice Works, along with hundreds of other organizations. The Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps is a National Direct Program. CNCS offers competitive AmeriCorps National Direct grants to nonprofits operating in more than one state. The National Direct Program also grants AmeriCorps funds to state and local programs, serving as a compliance agent and manager. Visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/> for more details.

/ Notice to Applicants

ABOUT THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service.¹ This check is mandatory for all AmeriCorps-funded national service programs and includes state criminal registry checks in both the state of service and state of residence at time of application; a nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) (<https://www.nsopw.gov/>); and a fingerprint-based search of the national FBI database. All accepted applicants must complete the necessary procedures to undergo the required criminal background checks.

Please note that you will be ineligible to serve in AmeriCorps if you:

¹ See also <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check> and 45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207

- Are registered or required to be registered as a sex offender on the National Sex Offender Public Website (therefore, this check must be completed before a position offer can be extended);
- Have been convicted of murder as defined and described in 8 U.S.C. 1111; or
- Refuse to undergo any of the criminal history checks outlined above.

If the member does not have the results of completed National Service Criminal History Checks by their first day of service, they may not begin counting hours of service.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES AS AMERICORPS MEMBERS

If selected for the Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Program, Members shall be restricted from engaging in certain activities pursuant to AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR § 2520.65 while charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps Members will be required to certify that they shall not engage in any of the prohibited activities throughout the course of their project during their service hours on the application.

AmeriCorps Members are prohibited from engaging in the following activities during service hours or whilst wearing any AmeriCorps identifying logos:

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - i. A business organized for profit;
 - a. ii. labor union;
 - b. iii. partisan political organization;
 - c. iv. nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these 9 provisions shall be construed to

- prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
- d. v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 3.g. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
 - j. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 - k. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
 - l. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

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

/ Program Details

ABOUT EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS AMERICORPS VETERANS LEGAL CORPS

Supported by CNCS, the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps launched in 1993 with an aim to create service opportunities for law students to help fill the gaps in civil legal aid. Through direct representation, community outreach, and collaboration, each year, hundreds of Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Members provide legal services to thousands of people across the country, and work in a variety of issue areas including veterans' assistance, foreclosure prevention, and disaster relief.

Part of the Corporation for National and Community Services-funded AmeriCorps program, AmeriCorps Law Student Members are eligible to earn a \$1,230 AmeriCorps Segal Education Award upon completion of 300 hours of service, which can be used to pay current educational expenses such as tuition or qualified student loans.

About Veterans Legal Corps:

The Veterans Legal Corps is an Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowship program supported by CNCS to address gaps in the legal aid community through direct representation, community outreach, and collaboration. Through the Veterans Legal Corps (VLC), Equal Justice Works engages lawyers and law students to provide critical legal intervention to low-income and homeless veterans that ultimately leads to higher incomes, better health, safer and more secure housing, and family stability. If selected, Law Student Members will support licensed attorneys (VLC Fellows) in securing benefits for veterans and their families, and eliminating legal barriers to housing and employment, among other services.

/ Application Requirements

The following are prerequisites for all applicants seeking to join the Veterans Legal Corps. Prior to submitting an application, all applicants must meet the eligibility criteria and obtain placement at a host organization, with a qualifying project

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Equal Justice Works and the Corporation for National and Community Service require that applicants demonstrate the following eligibility requirements in order to serve as AmeriCorps Members.

1. Possess U.S. Citizenship or Lawful Permanent Resident Status

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

2. Serve at a Qualifying Host Organization

AmeriCorps restricts the type of organization that can host a Law Student Member. In order to be eligible for the Veterans Legal Corps, an applicant must have secured a placement with a qualifying host organization in the United States prior to submitting an application.

Qualifying host organizations include:

- Organizations that are already hosting Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps Fellows (Visit the [Equal Justice Works website](#) for participating host organizations).
- Nonprofit organizations serving veterans, military families, homeowners facing foreclosure, victims of disaster, or organizations engaged in medical-legal partnerships;
- Nonprofit legal service organizations receiving funding from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC);
- Sites actively recruiting Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Members. A list, while not exhaustive, can be found on our website.

Excluded Organizations: The following do not qualify as AmeriCorps JD host organizations:

- Internationally-focused or internationally-based organizations;
- Organizations primarily engaged in lobbying or impact litigation;
- Public Defenders;
- For-profit entities, including private law firms of any sort.

3. Serve at a Qualifying Program

A project must propose to provide legal services aligned with our nationwide Veterans Legal Corps fellowship program. A project qualifies if it includes support of direct client services within the defined area of civil legal aid. Your project is ineligible if it includes policy work, environmental advocacy, criminal defense, or involves any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps regulations, see p. 10. Please reference the chart below for more details on qualifying projects for the Veterans Legal Corps:

Qualifying Project

- Support attorneys on civil legal cases for veterans or members of their family/community;
- Support attorneys on civil legal cases for active duty service members or their families.

Additionally, applicants must undergo a National Service Criminal History Check. An individual is ineligible for service if registered, or required to be registered as a sex offender or convicted of murder. See Notice to Applicants below.

/ How to Submit an Application

Once you have confirmed a qualifying project at a qualifying host organization, you must initiate an online application using Equal Justice Works' Student Application Manager (SAM). All applicants are required to fully complete the enrollment process in SAM. It should take approximately thirty minutes to complete the candidate portion of the application.

Paper applications will not be accepted, unless specifically requested by Equal Justice Works staff or if the SAM site is unavailable. If you are unable to submit an electronic application, please contact vetslegalcorps@equaljusticeworks.org for further instructions.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

A completed application consists of the following:

- Member Profile- Name, contact information, address, social security number, date of birth, and law school enrollment information;
- Demographic "AmeriCorps Information"- AmeriCorps eligibility, past AmeriCorps experience, and demographics & diversity information;
- Project and Host Site information- Host organization name & address, supervisor name, project dates and funding amount (if applicable), and description of project activities. NOTE: The host site will need to review and submit the Project Description section in order to complete the application;

- Signed Member Service Agreement- Contract must be signed after acceptance;
- Must be signed by the host site and Applicant
- Signed criminal background check release form- Required by AmeriCorps so we can run the National Service Criminal History Check;
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship or Legal Permanent Resident status- document upload;
- Copy of signed Social Security Card;
- Résumé.

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

1. Create an account in the Student Application Manager (SAM) [here](#), and follow the instructions. Once completed, a verification email will be sent to your inbox.
2. You should receive a message within five to ten minutes. If you do not receive a message from VetsLegalCorps@EqualJusticeWorks.org, check your spam filters. For future correspondence, please also add this email address to your safe sender list.
3. Follow the hyperlink in the email message to return to SAM. Complete the project and Host Site information, upload the supporting documentation, and sign the criminal history check release.
4. Press the “lock” button to route your application to your host site for approval. The designated host signing authority must review, and may edit your project description.
5. The host site completes the final step of the application process by submitting the application.
6. Equal Justice Works reviews all applications. If you are accepted, the Member Service Agreement will be sent to the host site for review and signature. An acceptance email will be sent to your registered email account.

NOTE: The acceptance email will include step-by-step instructions for the following tasks, which must be completed prior to beginning service:

- Sign the Member Service Agreement
 - Watch the mandatory AmeriCorps JD Orientation webinar
 - Review the **2019 Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Manual**
 - Complete Truescreen profile to initiate State(s) and National Sex Offender criminal history checks
 - Schedule an appointment with Field Print to initiate your FBI criminal history check
7. Once your host site has signed the Member Service Agreement, you will be able to access the Agreement in SAM for review, counter-signature, and final submission.
 8. To finalize the application process, finish completing the instructions in the acceptance email.

Only complete applications, including all required documentation, will be considered. Equal Justice Works will use the information in your application to evaluate you for Veterans Legal Corps Law Student membership and, if selected, register you with AmeriCorps. All information will be kept confidential and secure. If you don't receive an acceptance or rejection email within seven days of locking-in your application, please inquire about the status of your application by sending an email to VetsLegalCorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE: NEXT STEPS

If you are accepted into the program, you will receive an official welcome email with next steps for orientation and training. You will also receive the Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Manual that includes full and detailed information about the program. The welcome email will be sent at the time of acceptance, usually within 1 one week of submitting a completed application.

/ Additional Resources

- [Corporation for National and Community Service](#)
- [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#)

/ Questions?

If you have any questions about the application process for the Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Program, please contact us at vetslegalcorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

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<https://www.equaljusticeworks.org/law-students/part-time-summer/vlc/>