



**EQUAL
JUSTICE
WORKS**



/ Law Student Program Manual

Veterans Legal Corps
June - August 2019

/ Introduction

For more than 20 years, Equal Justice Works has partnered with the [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) to manage AmeriCorps programs for lawyers and law students.

This manual describes the policies and procedures of the Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Program. As Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Members and supervisors, you represent three important entities: your host organization (host site), Equal Justice Works, and AmeriCorps. Equal Justice Works has six strong values that guide the program, which we expect host sites and Equal Justice Works VLC Law Student Members to uphold:

- Host sites are expected to provide effective and rewarding service experiences for Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Members. We understand that a supportive site is critical for a successful term of service.
- Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Members are expected to be leaders in their communities and organizations, and to advocate for their clients with all of their skills and passion.
- Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Members, site staff, and Equal Justice Works are all part of the national service movement. We are proud of our affiliation with other programs, state commissions, and the 100,000 AmeriCorps Members across the country who share the value of “getting things done.”
- Equal Justice Works insists on excellence in program management and compliance. We consider management of taxpayer dollars to be a sacred trust, and we strive to operate the most effective and efficient program in the country.
- Equal Justice Works also strives for the creation of a national community of public interest lawyers and peer networks to ensure quality experiences. Equal Justice Works aspires to advance the careers of law students and the capacities of host site organizations.
- As a Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Member, you are responsible for contributing to the quantifiable outcomes of the Veterans Legal Corps.

Thank you for your commitment to filling the justice gap as the next generation of public interest lawyers and law professionals. We are delighted to support you in the program. We want to hear from you! Please contact us to let us know how things are going at vetslegalcorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

Sincerely,
The Equal Justice Works Team

/ Overview

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. We facilitate Fellowships at legal services organizations to help fulfill our nation's promise of equal justice for all.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS)

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act, which established the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and brought the full range of domestic community service programs under the umbrella of one central organization. This Act incorporated two existing national service programs: the longstanding VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program, created by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). In 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which expanded AmeriCorps to 250,000 members by 2017.

CNCS is the agency that oversees AmeriCorps and grants funds to Equal Justice Works and hundreds of other organizations. CNCS offers AmeriCorps National Direct grants through a competitive process to nonprofits that operate programs in more than one state. The Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowship is a National Direct Program.

EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS AMERICORPS LAW STUDENT PROGRAM

Supported by CNCS, the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellowship program was created in 1993 to address gaps in the legal aid community through direct representation and community outreach and collaboration. Lawyers and Law Student Members provide legal services to thousands of people across the country. Over the years, members have worked in a variety of issue areas including veterans' assistance, foreclosure prevention, veterans' benefits and disaster relief.

VETERANS LEGAL CORPS PROGRAMS

In 2019, law students will serve in the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps (VLC). In the Veterans Legal Corps, law students provide legal services to help low-income and homeless veterans overcome barriers to employment, housing, benefits, general civil legal aid, and other critical needs. Law students must serve at a non-profit organization that provides direct services to low-income and homeless veteran clients in their community. Depending on the organization in which the law student is serving, they may have the opportunity to serve directly alongside a current Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps Fellow. Many positions are available nationwide.

/ Member Requirements

MEMBER ORIENTATION & TRAINING

The Student Application Manager (SAM)

SAM is a web-based system hosted by Equal Justice Works that manages all member paperwork related to application, enrollment, Member Service Agreements, time logs, and exiting procedures. The system is secure, efficient, and paperless. Equal Justice Works uses SAM to manage member files completely electronically. Unless specifically requested by staff, members should submit required documents via SAM.

All VLC Law Student Members are required to participate in various training exercises at their host organization and through online webinars to help familiarize them with their host site, issues affecting their communities, how to document project activities, and AmeriCorps compliance. Training may also further their knowledge about the local community and effective outreach activities.

Mandatory VLC Law Student Member Webinar

All VLC Law Student Member Members must participate in the mandatory [VLC Law Student webinar](#) prior to start of service. This webinar covers required orientation topics related to AmeriCorps service requirements, member responsibilities and expectations, the criminal history check process, and the Segal Education Award. Applicants must view the webinar on SAM before they can sign the Service Agreement. Failure to view the webinar may result in disqualification.

Training Hours

VLC Law Student Members must participate in training for a minimum of 4 hours and a maximum of 60 hours during their term of service. Members are encouraged to work with their host site supervisor to develop a training plan for their term. Members will also receive notifications about training that Equal Justice Works provides periodically through both live and recorded webinars.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

General

It is an AmeriCorps requirement that all members initiate and complete a fingerprint-based FBI, repository-based state(s) criminal history check and a National Sex Offender check. All of the checks must be successfully cleared, with results uploaded to SAM prior to an AmeriCorps member's start date. State criminal history checks are required for the state the member lived in when they applied to the VLC Law Student Program, as well as the state the member will be servicing in (where the host organization is located).

Please be aware that members are responsible for consenting to criminal history checks during the application process, and through Truescreen, and may not count any hours worked before the completion of these checks. The mandatory requirements are available on the [AmeriCorps website](#).

Equal Justice Works will take results into consideration when considering eligibility for AmeriCorps service, but a criminal record does not automatically exclude individuals from AmeriCorps service except if a Member:

- Is listed on the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)
- Has been convicted of murder as defined and described in Section 1111 of Title 18, United States Code
- Refuses to undergo any of the criminal history checks outlined above

Members should review the Criminal History Checks section on their SAM profile to identify the status of their background checks. Please review the steps below for more information on how to process your required state and National Sex Offender criminal history checks through Truescreen and the FBI check through Fieldprint.

Truescreen Instructions

Step 1: Create a profile through Truescreen with the link and access code

The applicant will need to provide the following information to complete the Truescreen process.

- Legal first and last name
- Address and residence since date
- Social Security Number
- DOB
- Phone
- Email
- Aliases/Other names
- Indicate if you are: Member/volunteer or staff applicant
- Disclose convictions of murder and/or sex offenses that require registration
 - If convicted, the information regarding the conviction is required: Conviction geographic information (country, state, county, city/town), charge, charge type, name of court, charge date, case number, sentence, details, probation, name used during arrest

Step 2: Upload government issued ID on Truescreen Profile

Government-issued photo identification must be uploaded. This can be a clear and legible picture or file that can be uploaded into the system. Acceptable forms of government issued photo identification include:

- State drivers' licenses
- Non-driver photo IDs issued by states' Departments of Motor Vehicles (including the IDNYC, an ID issued through a New York City program)
- Federally-issued photo IDs, including official passports or a Native American Tribal ID from a federally-recognized tribal government.
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Certificate of Citizenship
- Government employee photo ID (city, county, state, or federal)
- U.S. military or military dependent photo ID
- U.S. Permanent Resident Card/Alien Registration Receipt Card (Green Card)
- Trusted Traveler IDs (including valid Global Entry, FAST, SENTRI, and NEXUS cards)
- DOD Common Access Card
- Work VISA w/ Photo
- DHS trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)

Note: For applicants with a state of Maine government issued identification, please note the following: Individuals should not upload a driver's license or photo ID from Maine. Individuals should upload an alternate government-issued photo ID for the Truescreen process if one is available. If you do not have an alternate government-issued photo ID, please complete and upload the form found in the SAM profile under the Criminal History Check section.

Step 3: Consent to background check screening process.

Applicants will be required to enter a signature with a finger or mouse during this process.

Step 4: Results Received

Once results are received, they must be uploaded to SAM via the "Upload Document" button in the Criminal History Checks section.

Fieldprint Instructions:

Step 1: Schedule Appointment

Follow the instructions on SAM for [Scheduling FBI Fingerprint Appointments](#) schedule an appointment to complete your fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check. At the end of the online process, print the confirmation page to bring to your appointment. You will receive a confirmation via email with the scheduled appointment date. This confirmation is considered proof of initiation, and must be uploaded to SAM as soon as possible.

Step 2: Appointment

Attend the appointment to have your fingerprints taken. Bring the confirmation page and two forms of identification with you to your appointment.

Step 3: Results Received

Both the member and Equal Justice Works will receive notification upon the successful adjudication of the FBI criminal history check. Equal Justice Works will upload the results to SAM.

Note: VLC Law Student Members cannot start counting hours served until the State(s), FBI, and NSOPW criminal history checks are complete with documentation uploaded to SAM.

TRACKING TIME

General

AmeriCorps regulations require certified time logs for each Member. To ensure that the time log is accurate, please complete the time log in the Student Application Manager (SAM) weekly throughout the term of service. Please certify the month's work by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on the last day of the month. The time log will break the member's time down between service hours, training hours, and fundraising hours.

Service Hours vs. Training Hours

VLC Law Student Members must serve a minimum of 300 hours to be eligible for the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award. The member's hours are comprised of (1) service hours, (2) training hours, and (3) fundraising hours.

Service hours are the hours the member spends working at the organization (e.g., intakes, conducting research, preparing for a presentation, etc.). The majority of hours logged will be service hours. Members should not record hours that they are not actually working (i.e. when taking a lunch break or out of the office).

Training hours include the VLC Law Student webinar, host site orientation, and other training at the beginning of service. Thus, the first hours recorded will be training hours. Members must dedicate a minimum of 4 hours towards training, and may not exceed 60 hours total by the end of service.

Fundraising hours include any hours the member spends supporting their host organization in fundraising activities. The total number of hours spent must not exceed 10% of the member's total hours by the end of service.

Time Log

Members must complete time logs by logging into the SAM account and scrolling to the "Time Log" section. Members should click the bar and expand that section to select "Time Logger" to enter the time worked each day on the calendar. Members should allocate their time into the proper categories as appropriate: service, training, or fundraising hours.

Within the week following the last day of service, members must certify their time log by clicking "View and Accept" in the Time Log Certification & Exit Form section of the SAM page. Following the Member's time log certification, SAM will send an automated email to the Member's supervisor for certification.

/ Host Site Supervisor Requirements

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be a Supervisor for a Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Member, you must meet the following qualifications:

- Not be a current AmeriCorps Member yourself (including Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows)
- Be a current employee of the member's host site
- Intend to be in regular contact with the member and have knowledge of their hours logged, clients served, and activities
- Be aware of the responsibilities outlined below

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROJECT SUPERVISOR

Application Review & Submission

If designated by the applicant as the "host site supervisor," the supervisor must review and edit the applicant's project description, if needed. After a careful review of the applicant's project description, the designated supervisor must submit the completed application for review by Equal Justice Works.

Signing the Service Agreement

If designated by the applicant as the “signing authority” for the Member Service Agreement, the organization’s signing authority must certify the VLC Law Student Member Service Agreement before the application is complete. If a supervisor is not identified specifically as the Host Signing Authority in the application, they, as the supervisor, are nevertheless responsible for knowing the contents of the Member Service Agreement. Please ask the member to view the Member Service Agreement, or contact Equal Justice Works for a copy.

The VLC Law Student Member Service Agreement summarizes important AmeriCorps regulations and program requirements, including:

- The required hours of service for the member to complete the program and receive the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
 - The requirement that at least 4 hours and no more than 20% of the required hours be spent in training, including the required orientation described below
 - The requirement that the AmeriCorps Member may spend no more than 10% of his or her required hours performing fundraising activities
- The project description
- The list of prohibited activities which members must not engage in during their term of service in VLC Law Student (listed on page 14)
- The requirement to notify Equal Justice Works immediately if the member stops performing service (i.e., if the host organization and member decide to end the term of service, if the member has a personal emergency, or any other circumstance where the term of service has ended)

Pre-Service Orientation

Supervisors are responsible for providing their VLC Law Student Member(s) with an orientation to the host site and available resources during the first week of their service. The orientation should provide the member with the training, skills, knowledge, and supervision necessary to perform the tasks required for the assigned project positions, including specific training in a particular field and background information on the community served.

Supervision

Supervisors are expected to provide regular and adequate supervision to the Member (e.g. weekly meetings).

Time Logs

Equal Justice Works requires VLC Law Student Members to maintain an electronic time log in the Student Application Manager (SAM), which the supervisor must certify monthly. Time Logs should be certified by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time by the

final business day of the month. Members should also follow any timekeeping procedures required by the host organization.

Supervisors must work with the member to encourage them to complete the required hours of service **by August 31, 2019**. The following breakdown of hours is expected:

- Training: at least 4 hours, and no more than 60 hours
- Fundraising: no more than 10% of the member's required hours

After the member's term of service ends, supervisors will receive an email reminder to certify the member's time log. Supervisors must sign the final time log immediately to ensure Equal Justice Works can exit the member from the program.

Reporting

The overall goal of the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps is to provide direct legal services to low-income and homeless veterans, while furthering lawyers and law student's commitment to public interest work. As a result, law student members and supervisors are required to track outcomes related to specific issue areas, and ensure that a system is in place for the member to track the information. Members are encouraged to track this information weekly to ensure they have the data to complete a Final Report to Equal Justice Works at the end of their term of service. Please refer to Appendix A of this manual for more detailed information on the specific reporting outcomes.

Student Member Evaluation

Supervisors must complete a brief end-of-term evaluation of the performance of the member in the exit section of SAM. This is required by the AmeriCorps grant. The evaluation will focus on the following factors:

- Whether the member has completed the required number of hours
- Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments, tasks, or projects
- Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service

Participation in Monitoring Activities

Equal Justice Works will conduct program monitoring activities, such as informal phone calls, desk reviews or site visits throughout the course of the program to ensure program compliance, assess program progress, and offer technical assistance. Supervisors and law students are expected to participate in monitoring activities, which will be scheduled in advance.

Exit Procedures

For a member to successfully complete the program and be eligible for the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award, they must complete the exit procedures within one week of the member's last day of service. If all of the steps are not completed on time, the member will forfeit their education award, and may become ineligible for other AmeriCorps opportunities. Equal Justice Works is also penalized for every late exit, and high numbers of late exits could result in the loss of the AmeriCorps grant. Both the supervisor and the VLC Law Student Member must work together to complete the following steps by the deadline:

- Review and certify the exit form which includes:
 - The member time log
 - Certification of non-participation in prohibited activities
 - Certification that an VLC Law Student Member evaluation was completed
 - Supervisor's summary of the member's service activities
- Complete the Final Report

MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

General

CNCS requires every AmeriCorps program to establish and record measurable outcomes for each program year along with the total hours served. At the end of service, the member will be required to submit a Final Report, available through SAM. The member will be required to detail the accomplishments and challenges of their service experience in the final report.

Tracking Impact of Service

VLC Law Student Members should use the VLC Law Student Tracking Log (see Appendix A) or a similar database at their host site to document the various indicators listed, such as:

- the number of individuals to whom direct legal assistance was provided
- the number of documented positive outcomes
- the number of volunteers recruited

Members should complete the Tracking Log weekly to gather data points that will be used for the final report submission. The Tracking Log should be filed in a place where it can be referenced as needed by the VLC Law Student Member and/or at the request of Equal Justice Works.

Positive Outcomes

The main objective of the VLC Law Student Program is to provide direct legal services to low-income individuals and communities. Direct legal services may include any of the following:

- Conducting intake of individuals to identify and assess legal problems, regardless of whether they become clients
- Providing supervised advice and/or referrals to individuals, regardless of whether they become clients
- Assisting clients (anything from making a phone call on their behalf to actual legal representation in an administrative hearing or in court)
- Helping a host site staff member (paralegal, attorney, etc.) assist a client (e.g., research and writing, preparation for administrative or court hearings)
- Conducting outreach to grow the capacity of your host organization, or to spread awareness about the issue it serves
- Leading “know your rights” community education sessions
- Tracking intake of priority-area clients, such as veterans, victims of natural disasters, clients with barriers to employment, or clients seeking immigration legal services

Clients Served

Members should count the number of clients served only when they achieved a positive outcome resulting from services the member provided or helped their supervisor provide.

Example: The client’s goals were partially or fully met due to legal representation, or the client’s situation improved due to legal assistance

Documented Positive Outcomes

“Documented” does not mean that a member has an official letter from a court; verbal notification from the client is fine.

Examples:

- Increased income
- Foreclosure delayed or avoided
- A civil protection order granted

Partial victories count, as well (e.g., requested 100 percent disability rating and received 50 percent disability rating).

Equal Justice Works understands that, as law students, members are under the supervision of an attorney and are frequently contributing to, but not solely responsible for, the outcomes below. If a law student member contributed to the outcome, they may report it. Not all students will have data to report in all sections, so members should only complete what is applicable to their project.

Success Stories

Members must provide success stories, which should be documented during their term of service. When documenting these stories, it is important to describe the positive impact/outcome the member's contribution makes on the community as much as possible.

An outcome is a tangible, measurable (ideally with a number—a dollar value or percentage) benefit to the client, community, or office. To convey outcomes effectively, it is often beneficial to write from the client's or community's perspective rather than the lawyer's. These narratives are intended to put a legal victory in a non-legal context for a general audience. Additionally, it is critical that members do not use identifying information for any clients in their story. For client stories, members should refrain from using personally identifying information without written informed consent from the client.

Examples:

- “We convinced the judge to expunge Mr. Smith’s criminal record and, as a result, he received a higher paying job that increased his annual income by 25 percent. This additional income saved his home from foreclosure, preventing his three children from transferring school districts halfway through the school year.”
- “For three days in July some of our VLC Law Student Members had the opportunity to participate in the 24th Annual San Diego Stand Down, the largest event of its kind in the country. The three-day event provided holistic services to more than 1,000 veterans. One of the services offered to veterans is an onsite homeless court where veterans can have their cases resolved immediately. The services are a joint collaboration of the San Diego Public Defender Office, District Attorney, City Attorney, and the San Diego court system. Volunteer attorneys from Judge Advocate General (JAG), legal services attorneys, and our AmeriCorps Fellows assisted the veterans from initial intake through hearings held under a tent on a handball court.”
- “In the process of working with a community organization trying to address homelessness, I helped a community group further its efforts to develop an affordable housing complex in its neighborhood by identifying properties and researching land use laws. At the end of the summer, the community group had identified three properties and was applying for financing for one of them. The property had 100 units of housing, which would be offered at affordable rates to qualifying families.”

/ Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

GENERAL

VLC law student members receive approximately \$1,230 for an AmeriCorps Segal Education Award upon completion of 300 hours of service, which can be used to pay current educational expenses or qualified student loans. The AmeriCorps Segal Education Award is a post-service benefit provided directly by the Corporation for National & Community Service. When the member completes their term of service and finalizes required documents for exiting, they will be eligible to receive the Segal Education Award within 30 days.

EXIT INSTRUCTIONS

- Log in to the [My AmeriCorps Portal](#) (Members will have created a login during the enrollment period at the beginning of your service term).
- Request disbursement of the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award to the member's school or lender. Members can use the award to pay back student loans or to pay their tuition bill for the upcoming semester.

Note: payments are made directly to the member's school or loan company. Members will not receive a check or a deposit to their bank account

Members have up to seven years after the end of their term of service in which to use the Segal Education Award. Members can use it all at once or in parts. The award is subject to taxation in the year it is used, and AmeriCorps does not withhold taxes from the award.

Visit the [CNCS website](#) for more information about this benefit.

/ AmeriCorps Requirements

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

The Veterans Legal Corps is a Corporation for National Community Service AmeriCorps National Direct grant. As such, there are restrictions placed by Congress on members' activities during their term of service. Members cannot engage in certain "prohibited activities" during their service. Pursuant to the regulations of CNCS, [45 C.F.R. 2520.30](#), members of AmeriCorps programs are prohibited from performing certain activities in the course of their duties, at the request of program staff, or in a manner that would be associated with the activities of the AmeriCorps program or CNCS.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed below on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo must not be worn while doing so. At the end of the term, supervisors will be asked to certify that the member(s) did not engage in these activities.

AmeriCorps-Prohibited Activities Include:

- Attempting to influence legislation
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
- 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
- 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
- Providing a direct benefit to:
 - A business organized for profit
 - A labor union
 - A partisan political organization
 - A 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 amounts of lobbying, except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative
 - An organization engaged in the religious activities described as explained above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
- 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. Members 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. Members should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Any questions related to AmeriCorps prohibited activities should be directed in the first instance to Equal Justice Works for guidance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The VLC Law Student Member understands that the following acts will also constitute a violation of the host site's rule of conduct:

- Repeated absenteeism or tardiness;
- Repeated use of inappropriate language (i.e., profanity);
- Failure to wear appropriate attire to service assignments;
- Stealing or lying;
- Activity that may physically or emotionally damage others;
- Possessing or using illegal drugs during the term of service;
- Consuming, abusing, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages—or any illegal drugs—during the performance of service activities. Failure to notify the host site immediately of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of service as required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act. *See 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq.*

LEAVING SERVICE EARLY

Should a member need to terminate their service early for any reason, it is required that Equal Justice Works staff be notified immediately. There are limited circumstances in which a member can end service early and still be entitled to receive a portion of the Segal Education Award.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

CNCS requires AmeriCorps programs to have a grievance procedure in place to resolve disputes between AmeriCorps Members and host sites, AmeriCorps Members and Equal Justice Works, or host sites and Equal Justice Works. By participating in the program and signing the Member Service Agreement, members and host sites agree to abide by this procedure in the event of a dispute regarding service-related issues such as assignments, evaluations, suspension, or release for cause. The following six steps constitute the grievance procedure:

1. Pre-Complaint Process

Aggrieved parties should attempt to resolve any problems or disputes with the other party directly. Any issues should be clearly stated and understood by both parties. The aggrieved party may file a written grievance complaint if the informal process does not resolve the matter, or if the party chooses not to pursue an informal resolution process.

2. Written Grievance Complaint

Aggrieved parties who have attempted to resolve their grievance under the pre-complaint process without success may file a written grievance complaint with Equal Justice Works no later than one year after the date of the alleged occurrence.

3. Hearing

Except when a grievance alleges fraud or criminal activity, Equal Justice Works will designate a neutral official within 30 days of the filing of a written grievance complaint to hold a hearing regarding the dispute.

4. Hearing Decision

A decision on any such grievance will be made no later than 60 days after filing the grievance.

5. Arbitration

If the hearing decision is averse to the aggrieved party, or if no decision has been reached within 60 days after the filing of a grievance, the filing party may submit the grievance to binding arbitration before a qualified arbitrator who is jointly selected and independent of the interested parties. An arbitration decision will be made no later than 30 calendar days after the commencement of the arbitration proceeding.

6. Costs of Arbitration

If the arbitration decision is averse to the filing party, then the cost of the arbitration proceeding must be divided evenly between the parties of the arbitration. If, however, the filing party prevails under a binding arbitration proceeding, then Equal Justice Works must pay the total cost of the proceeding and the reasonable attorney's fees of the prevailing party.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

The host site must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The host site has agreed to provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified AmeriCorps Members. An AmeriCorps Member who needs reasonable accommodations may make a written request to the host site supervisor.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Additionally, the host site's program must be available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, political affiliation, or religion. The host site understands that it is unlawful to retaliate against any person or organization filing a complaint about such discrimination. In addition to filing a complaint with local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, the host site understands that anyone, including the AmeriCorps Member, may bring a complaint to the attention of the CNCS.

If either the host site or the member believes that there has been unlawful discrimination, or if they want more information, contact:

Kristen Uhler-McKeown, Director of Public Programs
Equal Justice Works
1730 M Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 466-3686 ext. 129 or kuhlermckeown@equaljusticeworks.org

Or:

Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness
Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20525
(800) 833-3722 or eo@cns.gov

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE, RELEASE & SUSPENSION

Progressive Discipline

Except where immediate release or suspension of the AmeriCorps Member is mandatory (as outlined below), or in the event of extraordinary circumstances, the host site will engage in progressive discipline for violations of the Rules of Conduct before releasing or suspending the AmeriCorps Member. The following sequence below is suggested to host sites, but not required. Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Members should request a copy of their host sites' progressive discipline policies.

- **First Offense:** an appropriate host site representative will issue a verbal warning to the AmeriCorps Member
- **Second Offense:** an appropriate host site representative will issue a written warning and reprimand to the AmeriCorps Member (Equal Justice Works must be informed in the event a written warning is issued to a member)
- **Third Offense:** the AmeriCorps Member may be suspended for one day or more (Equal Justice Works must be notified if an AmeriCorps member has been suspended for any period of time)

- **Fourth Offense:** the host site may release the AmeriCorps Member for cause after consulting with Equal Justice Works.

For Cause Circumstances

The AmeriCorps Member can be terminated or suspended from the host site “for cause”. “For cause” circumstances that *may*, in the discretion of the host site, result in the release of an AmeriCorps Member, include:

- Conduct that undermines the effectiveness of the host site or the assigned project
- Conduct that constitutes inappropriate behavior or misconduct

“For cause” circumstances that *will* result in the release or suspension of the AmeriCorps Member from service include:

- If the AmeriCorps Member has been convicted of a felony, or has been convicted of the sale or distribution of a controlled substance or illegal drug
- If the AmeriCorps Member has dropped out of the program without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances from the appropriate host site representative
- If the AmeriCorps Member has committed any of the offenses listed in paragraph Section C of the Member Service Agreement
- Any other serious breach of the Member Service Agreement that, in the judgment of the host site, warrants dismissal

Compelling Personal Circumstances

Upon the AmeriCorps Member’s request, the host site or program may release or suspend the AmeriCorps Member from service, due to compelling personal circumstances, if the AmeriCorps Member:

- Has a disability or serious illness that makes completing the term impossible
- Suffers a serious injury, illness, or death of an immediate family member of the AmeriCorps Member that makes completing the term unreasonably difficult or impossible for the AmeriCorps Member
- Has military service obligations
- Experiences other unforeseeable circumstance(s) beyond the AmeriCorps Member’s control that makes it impossible, or unreasonably difficult, for the AmeriCorps Member to complete the term of service, such as a natural disaster, a strike, relocation of a spouse, or the nonrenewal or premature closing of a project or the host site, *and* the host site deems that circumstance(s) to be compelling

Compelling personal circumstances *do not include* leaving the host site:

- To enroll in school
- To obtain employment, other than in moving from welfare to work
- Dissatisfaction with the host site

If the AmeriCorps Member discontinues the term of service for any reason other than a release for compelling personal circumstances as described above, the AmeriCorps Member will cease to receive the benefits described above and will receive no portion of the Segal Education Award or interest payments.

If the AmeriCorps Member discontinues the term of service due to compelling personal circumstances as described above, the AmeriCorps Member will cease to receive benefits described above. If, however, the AmeriCorps Member has completed at least 15 percent of the required service hours, the AmeriCorps Member can receive a prorated portion of the Segal Education Award or interest payments described above.

EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns related to the VLC Law Student Program, please contact vetslegalcorps@equaljusticeworks.org.

Equal Justice Works
1730 M St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 466-3686

The Veterans Legal Corps Law Student Program is part of an AmeriCorps program.

APPENDIX A:

VLC Law Student Final Report		
Client Outcomes Summary		
<p>We understand that as a law student you are under the supervision of an attorney and that you are frequently contributing to, but not solely responsible for, the outcomes below. A positive outcome is a financial or situational improvement that results from the service you provided or helped your supervisor provide. If you contributed to the outcome, you may report it unless a full time Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellow is also reporting it.</p> <p>For example, count it as a positive outcome if the client's goals were partially or fully met due to legal representation or the client's situation improved due to legal assistance. Examples of documented positive outcomes include: increased income, foreclosure delayed or avoided, civil protection order granted. Partial victories count (e.g., requested 100% disability rating, received 50% disability rating).</p>		
General Information:	Total number of client intake/witness interviews or screenings performed:	
	Total number of fact sheets and training materials created:	
	Total number of community legal meetings for which you provided assistance or support (e.g. know your rights trainings, specific legal topic education etc.):	
	If your host organization employs an Equal Justice Works Fellow, number of cases you supported with a Fellow:	
Hours of Service*	Total number of hours spent on legal research and support on a client's case (e.g. drafting declarations, legal research, drafting court filings, etc.):	
	Total number of hours spent working directly with clients	
Program Outcomes		
VLC Outcomes:	Clients Served- Number of veterans, active duty military, or family members of veterans or active duty to whom you provided assistance:	
	Positive Outcomes- Positive outcomes for veterans/military families (e.g. delayed eviction, obtained disability benefits, discharge upgrade, etc.):	
	Community Needs Identified- Number of legal needs of veterans and military families identified (e.g. community education, need for additional services, etc.):	
	Community Needs Addressed- Number of veterans and military family needs addressed:	
	Case Support- If your host organization employs an Equal Justice Works Fellow, number of cases you provided support on with a Fellow:	

Program Summary Narrative

This is an opportunity for you to tell us briefly about your overall experience at your host organization this year. Please highlight the impact of your work and outcomes achieved. Client success stories should be anonymized or have written client permission before sharing them.

Example: "Over the course of the summer, I was able to see 100 people, and I was able to close the cases of 20 of those individuals. Of the 20 cases closed, I recovered \$15,000 in unpaid wages and helped to prevent five evictions. I also educated 2,500 community members about enforcing the housing code and 80% of those who attended my presentations said they would use the information immediately. Finally, I helped my supervising attorney to author the first guide to pest-related housing code violations in our state."

Describe your overall experience in no more than 200 words, including as much data as possible:

Success Story Narrative

This is an opportunity for you to tell us briefly about a specific project or success story this year. A success story brings hard data to life. When writing your success story, please describe the outcomes for the featured client and/or the specific community as clearly and descriptively as possible. Client success stories should be anonymized or have written client permission before sharing them. An outcome is a tangible and measurable benefit to your client, community or your host site (ideally with a number, a dollar value, or percentage). To convey a success story effectively, it is often beneficial to write from the client's or community's perspective, not the lawyer's. These success stories are intended to put a legal victory in a non-legal context for a non-legal audience.

For example, instead of "the case required drafting four separate complex motions which each required hours of legal research," try: "We were able to convince the judge to expunge Mr. Smith's criminal record and, as a result, he received a higher paying job that increased his annual income by 25%. The additional income saved his home from foreclosure, preventing his three children from transferring school districts halfway through the school year."

Describe your success story in no more than 200 words, including as much data as possible: