



AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program

Helping Survivors Through Community Service

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What is AmeriCorps service?**
 - AmeriCorps is a voluntary service program that addresses critical needs in communities throughout the United States. It is often referred to as a domestic version of the Peace Corps. There are many AmeriCorps programs throughout the country at both the national and state level that focus on an array of issues including health, education, environment, economic opportunity, and veteran services.

- **What is the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP)?**
 - AVAP is one of seven AmeriCorps programs offered in the State of New Hampshire. It was established in 1994 as a way to address gaps in services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and stalking.
 - AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP) members serve at host sites throughout the state of New Hampshire and provide crisis intervention, direct support services, and advocacy to individuals and families who have been impacted by domestic and sexual violence and stalking. Members integrate economic empowerment into their advocacy by providing financial literacy and housing services to survivors with the goal of helping survivors gain financial independence and access to safe and affordable housing.

- **What is the time commitment of AVAP service?**
 - AVAP service year is a year commitment. The new program year begins the first Tuesday in September and runs through the last week of August. Both full time and half time service positions are available. Full time service is a commitment to a minimum of 1,700 service hours (37.5 hours per week) and half time service involves a commitment to a minimum of 900 service hours (approximately 20 hours a week).

- **What are the benefits of AmeriCorps service?**
 - AVAP members receive a weekly living stipend and a health insurance plan is offered to full time members. Upon successful completion of the service year, members receive an educational award that can be used toward qualifying student loan debt or towards the cost of future attendance at a qualifying educational institution. If a member has qualifying federal student loans, they may be eligible to apply for forbearance during service so that no payments



are due during the service term. AVAP members also receive training and professional development opportunities in the field of victim services.

- **How are members trained?**

- The first two weeks of service involve an intensive training in Concord, NH that includes a variety of sessions to prepare members to enter the field of victim/survivor advocacy. Members also receive additional training once they start service at their host sites to assure that members feel comfortable providing direct service. Throughout the program year, members attend team meetings on the third Friday of every month that include training sessions on topics relevant to the field. Members have the opportunity to provide feedback about what training topics they would like to see covered.

- **Why do people choose to do a year of service with AmeriCorps?**

- There are many reasons why people choose to serve with AmeriCorps. Some individuals are recently graduated from high school or college and are looking to develop professional skills, gain direct service experience, and add to their resume. Some individuals serve for a year in between undergrad and grad school as a way to give back to the community while earning the educational award to put towards the cost of grad school. Some individuals are looking for a career change and pursue service to explore different career paths. Some individuals are looking to feel more connected to a cause and/or community and find that service helps foster connections with other service minded individuals and helps provide a sense of purpose. Some individuals are looking to re-enter the workforce after some time away and find that a year of service is a good way to relearn skills and develop confidence. AmeriCorps has a vast alumni network and name recognition; having service experience on a resume can help individuals gain an advantage in a competitive job market or college/graduate school admissions.

- **How can I learn more about AVAP?**

- Visit AVAP's website at <https://www.nhcadsv.org/avap.html>
- Contact Natalie Ryckman, Program Manager, at 603-224-8893 ext 315 or at Natalie@nhcadsv.org