

## **Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Initiative Proposal Instructions**

[Equal Justice Works](#) will propose a new AmeriCorps program to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with a focus on housing, homelessness and veterans' services for the 2010-2013 funding cycle. Ten of these Fellowships will be focused on helping homeless veterans overcome barriers to housing and achieve economic stability. The approximate cost of an AmeriCorps Fellowship for one year is \$60,000, of which Equal Justice Works will provide just over half, including \$23,600 in cash and approximately \$7,000 in training and support. We seek partner organizations to host AmeriCorps Fellows and provide matching funding.

The Serve America Act calls for a percentage of AmeriCorps funding to go to organizations serving veterans and military families. Equal Justice Works and the American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty will collaborate to create ten AmeriCorps Legal Fellowships. These AmeriCorps Fellows will assist at-risk and homeless veterans remove the barriers to permanent housing that lead to a cycle of poverty and life on the street. Applicants are encouraged to propose a model for the provision of services to homeless veterans. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows may focus on areas including (but not limited to) representing and counseling clients on issues such as outstanding bench warrants and delinquent child support, while assisting veterans' access to benefits and credit. After the barriers are removed, AmeriCorps Legal Fellows will assist veterans to enter into agreements for stable housing.

### **Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Program**

Equal Justice Works manages one of the most successful and highly regarded AmeriCorps programs in the nation. In 15 years of administering Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) programs, Equal Justice Works has leveraged over \$15 million in new funding for legal services organizations. AmeriCorps Fellows have recruited over 12,000 volunteer lawyers and law students and served over 200,000 clients.

In 2003, Equal Justice Works launched a new AmeriCorps program, [Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps](#) (formerly the Pro Bono Legal Corps). In 2009, Equal Justice Works received an AmeriCorps grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for 30 [AmeriCorps Recovery Fellows](#) to prevent foreclosures. Today, Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps has 66 AmeriCorps Legal Fellows at 31 host organizations across the country.

The primary focus of the AmeriCorps Legal Fellows is to address the justice gap for underserved communities by providing legal services and managing pro bono opportunities for law students and lawyers. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows provide direct legal assistance, manage clinics and workshops, develop substantive legal resources and expand the capacity of the host organization's existing pro bono activities.

Through this process, ten AmeriCorps Recovery Fellows will be funded to assist veterans and their families by helping to stabilize their living situations, addressing obstacles to housing (such as child support arrearages and bench warrants), securing benefits and providing veterans with legal

representation to overcome barriers they face in procuring employment, housing, medical care and support services. These Fellows may assist with recruitment of volunteers.

Many Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellows serve homeless veterans across the country. In Los Angeles at Public Counsel's Center for Veterans Advancement, AmeriCorps Legal Fellow [Stacy Zimmerman's](#) primary focus is helping veterans with claims for VA benefits. Stacy also assists homeless veterans with other legal issues, including tickets, warrants, driver's license suspension, and employment issues.

AmeriCorps host sites also receive up to ten [Summer Corps](#) members each year. The current list of host sites and project descriptions can be found [here](#).

### **Financial Commitment**

The cost of hosting an AmeriCorps Legal Fellow varies based on compensation and healthcare costs for your agency. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows receive a base compensation of at least \$33,600, plus healthcare, bar dues, and an AmeriCorps education award. Equal Justice Works will provide the AmeriCorps living allowance of \$23,600 per Fellow through the AmeriCorps grant. Host organizations provide matching funds of at least a \$23,600 per Fellow in addition to supplemental benefits (such as housing and education loan repayment) and other benefits. Host organizations must also provide training, travel reimbursement, supervision and support for the Fellows.

### **Why should my organization apply to become a host organization for Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps?**

Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps provides people power. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows can increase your organization's capacity by expanding the scope and type of legal services your organization provides. We encourage applicants to include a pro bono generation and management component to the project. If volunteer law students and lawyers can help your organization expand your services to veterans, then this program is for you.

AmeriCorps is not a bricks-and-mortar grant. AmeriCorps Legal Fellows must have distinct roles in your organization and cannot displace existing staff. The Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps program is designed to expand capacity to serve as many clients as possible. AmeriCorps Fellows serve a greater number of people in need by recruiting, placing, and supporting pro bono lawyers and law students while carrying their own caseload.

### **What role does Equal Justice Works play in the selection and support of AmeriCorps Fellows?**

Unlike the [Equal Justice Works Fellowship](#) program, we select organizations for AmeriCorps grants, and not individuals. Your host organization will interview and select AmeriCorps Fellows independent of Equal Justice Works. Equal Justice Works will help host sites market the AmeriCorps positions to our national network of law schools, firms and stakeholders.

Once enrolled in the program, Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellows are part of a national community of public interest lawyers. They will attend two trainings during the year, the fall Leadership Development Training and the spring ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference. Equal Justice Works staff provides ongoing support and recognition of the Fellows throughout the year and the Fellows frequently build peer networks which advance their careers and the host organization's capacity.

### **Is there a match requirement?**

Yes. Host organizations must provide at least a 50% match. For each AmeriCorps Legal Fellow, host organizations receive a \$23,600 award and must provide at least \$23,600 in matching funds. The match varies based on the costs of compensation and benefits a host organization provides. Host organizations provide between \$10,000 and \$20,000 in supplemental (housing and education) benefits. Many host sites provide matching funds of \$30,000 per Fellow.

### **Eligible Host Organization Responsibilities**

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity to administer federal funds, implement a detailed plan of action to address a local unmet need, present strong connections to the community it serves and have the ability to raise the required matching funds.

The responsibilities for operating an AmeriCorps program include:

- Recruiting, selecting, placing, training and supervising the AmeriCorps Legal Fellows.
- Designating a Project Director, Fiscal Manager and Fellow Supervisor to oversee the project.
- Submitting progress reports, monthly expenditure reports and quarterly financial status reports.
- Participating in training and technical assistance meetings.

### **Timeline**

To ensure consideration for the 2010-2011 grant cycle, organizations must submit a proposal by March 12, 2010. Successful applicants will be announced in May. Host organizations will then recruit and select AmeriCorps Fellows for 12-month terms, which begin in August or September.

### **Technical Assistance:**

For information and clarification about the application, please contact Cole McMahon, Senior Program Manager – AmeriCorps, at [cmcmahon@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:cmcmahon@equaljusticeworks.org). A technical assistance call will be held on February 16, 2010, at 2:00 PM Eastern, 11:00 AM Pacific. To participate in the call, dial (712) 432-3900, and enter passcode 6828366#.

**Submission:** Please E-mail the concept proposal by March 12, 2010 to [cmcmahon@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:cmcmahon@equaljusticeworks.org).

Thank you for your interest in national service and Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps. Learn more about the AmeriCorps program [here](#).

**Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps  
Proposal Instructions**

**Formatting:** The proposal should be an MS Word document, single-spaced, and no longer than 8 pages, including the host organization information and performance measure charts.

**Host Organization Information**

Please complete this chart and paste it into your application narrative before the narrative.

Name of Organization (as shown on income tax return)	
Employer Identification Number (EIN)	
Executive Director	
Contact Name for Application	
Address	
City/State/Zip	
Phone	
Email	
Congressional Districts within your service area (provide district numbers, e.g: CA-19)	
Number of AmeriCorps Fellowships requested	
Grant funds to be requested (\$23,600 per Fellowship)	

**Concept Proposal Narrative:**

**1. Program Design (between 3 to 4 pages)**

Applicants should describe what the project will accomplish and the role the AmeriCorps Legal Fellows will play in the organization and the community.

**Rationale and Approach**

- a) **Needs** – Describe the specific need(s) your project will address. Include a documented, compelling description of the legal issues faced by veterans in the communities you intend to serve and how the needs were identified.
- b) **Description of Activities** – Include a detailed description of proposed activities that relate to the need(s) your project will address. Describe the legal issues facing veterans and the role the Fellow(s) will play in addressing it. Specifically, how will AmeriCorps Fellows eliminate barriers to housing for homeless veterans? If they will provide other legal services, describe those as well. If pro bono recruitment and management of lawyers and law students is an element of the project, describe the percentage of time this will require and how it will be accomplished.  
(Note:) AmeriCorps Legal Fellows may not engage in activities prohibited by CNCS. (See Appendix A.)
- c) **Accomplishment in Proposed Activity Areas** – Describe your organization’s history and past accomplishments addressing the legal needs of homeless veterans.

- d) **Involvement of Community** – Describe how you plan to involve target communities, including law schools, in identifying community needs and planning your project; discuss how you will include them in your project implementation.

**2. Organizational Capacity (no more than one page)**

Applicants should describe their organization's overall capacity to operate an AmeriCorps program. In this section, please include the following topics.

**Ability to provide sound program and fiscal oversight**

- a) **Management structure.** Describe the staff structure and other resources that will support the program at the host organization level. AmeriCorps requires that all subgrantee organizations are required to consult with and obtain written concurrence from any site-based unions. Describe plans to achieve union concurrence.
- b) **Capacity to manage finances.** Describe your capacity to manage a federal grant and to provide monitoring of financial and other required systems utilized to administer the AmeriCorps grant. Include the amount of supplemental benefits you will provide Fellows, and the sources of your matching funds.

**Performance Measures Table**

Estimate and quantify the accomplishments AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and their volunteers will complete during the 2010-2011 program year. Performance measures should be ambitious and attainable. Equal Justice Works will submit program-wide performance measures to CNCS based on these figures. Use the open lines provided to describe AmeriCorps Legal Fellow activities and outcomes that do not fall precisely within the performance measures. Please complete this chart and paste it into your application after the narrative.

Estimate the number of veterans you will serve under this application:

**Legal services:**

Legal Issue Area	# of clients receiving referrals to volunteer attorneys	# of clients receiving advice and/or brief services	#of cases Fellow will directly/fully represent clients	# of clinics conducted	# of clients assisted at clinics
Housing: LL/T, public housing, homelessness					
Housing: foreclosure defense, title issues					
Immigration					
Family law/Domestic violence					

Community economic development					
Individual rights (civil rights, disability, etc.)					
Education access					
Health/Medical					
Criminal					
Public benefits					
Other (insert issue area)					
<b>Totals</b>					

**Pro bono management, community building**

<b><u># of volunteer law students</u></b>	<b><u># of volunteer lawyers</u></b>	<b><u># of other community volunteers</u></b>	<b><u># of community organizations with whom the Fellows will work</u></b>

## APPENDIX A: AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation for National and Community Service, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- (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 host 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--
  - (1) a business organized for profit;
  - (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)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
  - (5) an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities; and
- (j) such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

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-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.