

# EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS AMERICORPS JD PROGRAM

## *AmeriCorps JD Application Guide*

1730 M ST NW. STE 1010

Washington, DC 20036

202.466.3686

[www.equaljusticeworks.org](http://www.equaljusticeworks.org)



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## Eligibility Criteria

AmeriCorps JD is a federally funded AmeriCorps program. As such, Equal Justice Works requires that members meet certain eligibility requirements including immigration status and Equal Justice Works member law school status. Additional information is as follows:

### *Immigration Status*

In order to be eligible for any AmeriCorps program, including AmeriCorps JD, you must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national 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 documentation of eligibility, such as a copy of an unexpired U.S. passport, birth certificate, and certificate of naturalization or Lawful Permanent Resident card.

### *Law School*

In order to participate in AmeriCorps JD, you must be a current student at an [Equal Justice Works member school](#).

### *Restrictions on Outside Funding*

Members may receive funding in the form of a grant, stipend or living allowance for their term of service, but it **may not** be earned as an hourly wage unless through Federal Work Study. AmeriCorps does restrict the amount of additional funding members can receive for the same service. As such, members will be asked to disclose the amount of funding they are receiving during the application if applicable. Please note that there is no restriction on work outside of your term of service (i.e. part-time job) or outside funds you receive for activities **outside** of your service (i.e. general scholarship for law school).

## Qualifying Host Organization

In order to be eligible for AmeriCorps JD, a student must have secured a placement with a qualifying host organization prior to submitting an application. AmeriCorps JD members must serve in the United States at a qualifying organization.

### *Qualifying host organizations include:*

- Organizations that are already hosting Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows and Equal Justice Works Fellows;
- 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); and/or
- Nonprofit organizations; public defender offices; and government agencies.

### *The following do not qualify as qualifying AmeriCorps JD host organizations:*

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

For further information on where AmeriCorps members can serve and the benefits to service, please visit the [AmeriCorps website](#).

## Qualifying Projects

AmeriCorps JD members must provide direct legal services to low-income and underserved individuals. The student's project is **not eligible** if s/he will do pure policy work or pure environmental work.

### *Examples of the type of work include:*

- *Direct legal services:* intake, legal form preparation, performing client and witness interviews, advocating for clients by telephone and in person, attending hearings, assisting attorneys in legal representation, carrying out legal research and writing
- *Outreach and education:* developing and distributing fact sheets, developing and delivering training on legal topics or on how to access legal services, ensuring potential clients are aware of their rights and available services
- *Capacity building:* activities which build the capacity of your host organization or other organizations to work in the previously specified priority areas, such as an organizational assessment, compiling best practices, organizing focus groups, leading planning committees

The student may not engage in any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps during his/her service hours, including but not limited to:

- proselytizing or engaging in religious instruction;
- attempting to influence legislation (lobbying);
- assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing;
- engaging in partisan political activities including elections and voter registration drives;
- referring or promoting abortion services; and/or
- providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, including small businesses.

The student is welcome to do any of these activities on their own time as long as they are not receiving AmeriCorps service hours or wearing AmeriCorps identifying logos. All AmeriCorps JD members must sign a document certifying they do not partake in any prohibited activities throughout the course of their project.

## Qualifying Projects for Priority Areas

A qualifying project for our priority areas including veteran services, disaster relief, and removing barriers from employment and housing must propose to provide services within the priority area for at least 50% of the students required 300 hours (150 hours or more).

Specific examples of removing barriers to employment or housing includes sealing, expunging, and/or correcting criminal records; correcting credit reports; helping clients to obtain occupational licenses; and/or restoring driver's licenses that are necessary for work.

## Application Selection Criteria

Equal Justice Works evaluates AmeriCorps JD applications and selects members using a number of factors including:

- quality of the application;
- eligibility of the applicant and applicant's host site;
- geographic diversity;
- law school diversity;
- preference for projects with host organizations that are current AmeriCorps Legal Fellow host sites, Equal Justice Works Fellowship host sites (see here for current Fellows), Veteran Treatment Courts, and/or are funded by the Legal Services Corporation; and
- Strong preference for projects where all 300 hours of service will be spent serving veterans or disaster victims, particularly for those choosing Fall or Winter start dates.

## Application Requirements and Process

Once you have secured a position with a host organization, it should take you approximately thirty minutes to complete the application (not including the time to have your Host Site sign the Member Service Agreement). A completed application consists of the following:

- Member Profile
- Demographic "AmeriCorps Information"
- Project and Host Site information
- Signed Member Service Agreement [By Host Site and Applicant]
- Signed criminal background check release form
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship or Resident status
- Resume
- Applicant snapshot (optional)

### *Application Process:*

1. Create an account in the **Student Application Manager (SAM)**. A message will be sent to your email account with login information and application instructions. Be sure to check the email account you used to register in SAM.
2. If you do not receive a message from AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org, check your spam filters. Please also add AmeriCorpsJD@EqualJusticeWorks.org to your safe sender list.
3. Return to **SAM** to complete the application and submit the proper documentation.

*Only complete applications, including all required documentation, will be considered. Equal Justice Works will use the information in your application to evaluate you for AmeriCorps JD membership and, if selected, register you with AmeriCorps. All information will be kept confidential and secure.*

## **Criminal History Checks**

As an AmeriCorps-funded national service program, all AmeriCorps JD applicants must consent in writing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check, which includes State criminal registry checks in the state of service and state of residence at time of application and a National Sex Offender Public Registry search. Additionally, accepted applicants must follow all steps necessary to undergo the required criminal background checks.

Equal Justice Works will conduct and review the results of each National Service Criminal History Check after applicants have applied to AmeriCorps JD, but prior to enrolling those who are selected as AmeriCorps JD members. Selection for AmeriCorps JD is contingent upon Equal Justice Works' review of the background check results. Having a criminal conviction is not an automatic bar to service. Each application is reviewed on a case by case basis. The AmeriCorps JD application provides further details about the criminal background check process.

## **Questions?**

If you have any questions about the application process for AmeriCorps, please contact us at [americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org).

Equal Justice Works  
AmeriCorps JD  
1730 M St. NW, Suite 1010  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 466-3686 x136  
[americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:americorpsjd@equaljusticeworks.org)  
<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/americorpsjd>

AmeriCorps JD is an [AmeriCorps](#) program.