

VetsWork GreenCorps

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What is VetsWork GreenCorps?

VetsWork GreenCorps is an AmeriCorps program that trains U.S. military veterans for a potential career in wildfire landscape management, wild land firefighting and/or other potential public land management and natural resource work. It was developed with the dual purposes of:

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1. Supporting the transition of veterans from a military career to a civilian career while
2. Addressing the unmet needs of our nation's public lands/natural resource management agencies.

VetsWork GreenCorps is an 8-week internship program in which participants learn new skills, gain new knowledge and build professional contacts within the integrated fuels management sector. Interns spend their time in trainings and working on an extensive thinning project on the Umatilla National Forest. The goal of VetsWork GreenCorps is to help participants increase their opportunity to secure permanent jobs and assist potential employers in identifying qualified veteran candidates.

What is the Mt. Adams Institute?

[Mt. Adams Institute](#) (MAI) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through education, service learning, career development and research. MAI is headquartered in Trout Lake, Washington and currently operates in 10 states across the country.

What is AmeriCorps?

[AmeriCorps](#) is a national volunteer service program that engages more than 75,000 Americans a year, in service that supports nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. Since founded in 1994, more than 900,000 AmeriCorps Members have contributed more than 1.2 billion hours in service across America while tackling pressing problems and mobilizing millions of volunteers.

AmeriCorps assists interns by providing pathways for people entering the workforce. AmeriCorps places thousands of people into intensive service positions where they learn valuable work skills, earn a modest living stipend and money for education, and develop an appreciation for volunteerism and community service.

All VetsWork GreenCorps participants are enrolled as AmeriCorps Members for the duration of the program.

What Agency Partners with VetsWork GreenCorps?

Interns are placed with the U.S. Forest Service on the Umatilla National Forest, based out of Ukiah, OR. Day-to-day supervision and mentorship for participants comes from the on-site partners at Umatilla National Forest. MAI plays a support role through human resource functions, connection to resources, career development support and finding meaning in your career through your connections to the natural world.

Who Can Apply for a VetsWork GreenCorps Internship?

Applicants must:

- Be a U.S. Military Veteran (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, Army Reserve, or NOAA Corps)
- Have a DD 214 (with honorable discharge)
- 21-35 years or old.

A General Under Honorable (GUH) designation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you have GUH status, be prepared to discuss this with recruitment staff.

Why is this Program Just for Veterans, ages 21-35?

VetsWork GreenCorps was established to support military veterans as they transition into the civilian world. MAI recognized that there was a need to provide transition services that addressed some of the barriers that veterans have faced in securing employment in the civilian sector. MAI does offer a general population program (ages 21-30.) Please visit our [Public Lands Stewards](#) program.

The age restriction is in place in order to align with national initiatives such as the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, which has identified veterans, ages 21-35, as a special focus area.

Is the Internship Full-Time?

Yes. VetsWork GreenCorps Interns will serve an average of 40 hours per week: four, 10-hour days, Monday –Thursday.

How Long is the Internship?

VetsWork GreenCorps is a 2-month program (8 weeks). Interns must complete a minimum of 300 hours of service during that time. After the program, if interns are in good standing, they will be offered a position on the Umatilla Veteran Fire crew to work as a wildland firefighter for the US Forest Service for the remainder of the season.

Do Interns Get Paid?

Interns earn a modest living stipend of \$375/week (**paid monthly** & pre-tax amount). The actual amount is dependent on the number of weeks of service in each month. Months with four weeks of service = \$1,500 (pre-tax); five weeks = \$1,875 (pre-tax). Stipends are deposited directly into Interns' bank accounts **on the 10th of each month**. Applicants are highly encouraged to actively work with a budget to make sure that participating in the program is financially feasible.

What Other Benefits Are There?

In addition to the living stipend, VetsWork GreenCorps Interns earn an education award of \$1,374.60 (upon satisfactory completion of the program), free bunkhouse style housing, qualification to apply for food stamps and student loan forbearance.

VetsWork GreenCorps is a career development program designed to help interns navigate a career in the natural resource and public land management fields. The internship provides opportunities to build professional networks, experience a desired career path, and understand hiring practices. Training will address position specific skills and certifications as well as developing resumes and other application materials.

Do These Positions Require a Covid-19 Vaccination?

Yes. VetsWork GreenCorps Interns **must be fully vaccinated** against Covid-19 with the ability to provide documentation. This position serves alongside a crew of 20 people (other interns and Forest Service staff) that live and travel together for the entire term of service.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers an individual fully vaccinated against Covid-19, if they are:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

If you do not meet these requirements, you are not fully vaccinated.

What Will I be Doing?

GreenCorps members will learn all of the basic requirements/skills necessary to become a wildland firefighter. This includes coursework and certifications in chainsaw operation (S212), basic fire skills (red card) and risk assessment and management. Most of this training will be in the format of on-the-job training. During the VetsWork GreenCorps term of service you will not be assigned to work on any fires. You will receive continual training and your daily work will support the skills you are developing to be a wildland firefighter.

In conjunction with wildland firefighter trainings, interns will work on a fuels reduction project. Fuel reduction projects are designed as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards, to lessen catastrophic fire and its threat to the public and damage to property. The objective is to remove enough fuel (small trees and brush) so that when a wildfire burns, it is less severe and can be more easily suppressed. When fuels accumulate, they allow fires to burn hotter, faster and with higher flame lengths. The fuels reduction project will include thinning trees, removing underbrush, and de-limbing trees using chainsaws and other hand tools. Cut material is ground into chips or piled to be burned during the winter months.

Up to 20% of an intern's time can be spent on activities focused on an Intern's growth and development in the field. These include MAI's 2-day orientation, community service projects, professional development trainings, sharing experiences with other Interns and self-directed learning.

Participants of the program who perform satisfactorily during the service term have an opportunity to be hired directly onto a Forest Service fire (hand) crew immediately after the internship. This crew will focus on vegetation management, but have a strong potential to be used for fire assignments for the remainder of the fire season.

Are there other Veteran Positions Available?

Yes. Mt. Adams Institute also operates the VetsWork Environment internship program, a 10.5 month program experience (45 weeks). VetsWork internships cover the spectrum of the type of jobs available in the public lands / natural resources management / environmental sector. Some positions involve serving outside every day on trails, wilderness or forestry projects; others are more office situated and can involve writing, communication, project management or volunteer coordination. Interns must complete at least 1700 hours of service during that time.

Each internship depends on the individual position, but the bulk of the experience will be spent serving on real natural resources management / public lands / education projects as determined by the local supervisor.

For the most up-to-date open positions, please visit our [website](#) or contact our Recruitment Coordinator, Katie Schmidt, at: katie@mtadamsinstitute.org or (503) 504-5994 Monday-Friday 9a-4p Pacific.

How Do I Apply?

Email the following documents to Katie Schmidt at katie@mtadamsinstitute.org:

- [Resume](#)
- [Cover Letter](#)
- [Three Professional References](#) (military, civilian, or academic) – Information to include: Name, Title, Relation to you, Email & Phone Number.
- [Supplemental Questions](#):
 - What is your motivation for applying to VetsWork GreenCorps?
 - What are you hoping to get out of this experience?
- [DD 214 – \(with Honorable Discharge\)](#):
 - "General Under Honorable Conditions" discharge are considered on a case-by-case basis
 - Must be long form "Member 4 copy" (has 30 total boxes of information).
 - If you do not have a copy of your DD 214; order a copy from the [National Archives](#).

Can I Apply to More Than One Position?

Yes, submit a separate cover letter for each position that you are interested in applying to. For example, if you are applying to VetsWork GreenCorps, as well as a VetsWork Environment position, please send a separate cover letter for both. [Macslis](#) has great information on creating cover letters, resumes, etc...

What is the Interview Process?

- MAI screens application materials, conducts pre-interviews and reference checks, and recommends qualified applicants for interviews with the Umatilla National Forest site supervisor.
- The MAI VetsWork GreenCorps program coordinator interviews candidates alongside the Umatilla National Forest supervisor.
- If position is offered, additional paperwork will be required.

Where is the Position Located?

VetsWork GreenCorps is operated on the Umatilla National Forest, North Fork John Day Ranger District in Ukiah, Oregon. Ukiah is a remote, rural community in the eastern part of the state. The closest full-service towns are Pendleton (50 miles) and La Grande (57 miles).

Where Would I live?

Participants are provided housing (Frazier Bunkhouse) for the duration of the program by the Forest Service. It is bunkhouse style and for participants only. Participants must comply with bunkhouse rules provided by the Forest Service, including a no drugs, alcohol, firearms, or pets policy within the bunkhouse. Participants are responsible for providing their own food. Frazier bunkhouse is located 17 miles from Ukiah, OR and has limited cell/internet access. Participants will share a sleeping room with one other participant of the same sex. The large kitchen is shared among participants as are the same sex bathrooms.

I Don't Live Near the Position Location, Would I Have to Relocate?

Yes, interns will need to relocate to take part in the VetsWork GreenCorps program. This can be an added challenge that requires adequate research and planning. We encourage applicants who are considering a move to make sure that the position and location are a good fit. Mt. Adams Institute is not able to offer relocation assistance, but does encourage applicants to seek out resources from other veteran serving organizations like Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion or smaller local organizations.

I Have a Family, Can They Relocate with Me?

Potential participants with families are not excluded from the program, but it is difficult. Lodging is only provided for participants. In the past, participants have opted to be separated from family members during the program. They utilized their off days to visit with them.

Is this a team or individual placement program?

VetsWork GreenCorps utilizes a team model. Members live and work together for the duration of the experience. Participants need to work well with others, follow instructions and rules, and be receptive to learning and receiving performance feedback. The safety and efficient functioning of the team depends on adhering to these standards. If you are unable to meet these parameters from the start of the program, you should consider another program.

What are the Physical Requirements?

The physical requirements of VetsWork GreenCorps are extremely high. Participants will regularly carry loads of more than 50 pounds, hike 5-10 miles per day, and be on their feet for up to 10 hours per day including bending, squatting, lifting and utilizing a variety of hand tools and power tools. Much of the work is repetitive and must be done for multiple days. Participants will engage in daily PT activities including running several miles every morning, hiking and strengthening exercises.

Participants will have to pass the "pack test" – walk 3 miles with a 45 pound pack within 45 minutes. The test will be done on the first day of the program. Given the arduous nature of the program, it is important to be realistic about what you are capable of doing.

I Have a Service-Connected Disability; Can I Still Take Part in the Program?

Yes, if you can meet the requirements of the individual position (you need to be honest and realistic about your capabilities). Mt. Adams Institute and our partners will provide reasonable accommodation.

Can I Go to School or Work Another Job While in the Program?

Interns are expected to work 40 hours per week. It is extremely difficult to fulfill the obligations of the program and be in school or working another job.

Will I Get a Job at the End?

There is no guarantee of employment when the program is completed, but the intention of the program is to train the crew so that they can be hired directly on to the Umatilla Veteran Crew once the program is over. This decision will be based on member's performance and veteran hiring authority. VetsWork GreenCorps interns will have had ample opportunity to network, learn new skills and explore potential jobs during their term of service. All of these factors make participants more likely to be hired.

I Have Been Convicted of a Crime, Can I Still Take Part in the Program?

Yes. The only automatic disqualifiers are a murder charge/conviction and any required registration on the National Sex Offender Registry. Participation in the VetsWork GreenCorps program is contingent upon passing a state and federal background check as well as a name-based search in the National Sex Offender Registry.

A prior criminal record could impact your selection, but it will not immediately disqualify you. If you fail to disclose any infraction (even minor ones) and it shows up on your criminal background check, you can be immediately disqualified. It is better to be forthright with this information from the beginning of the application process. Don't hesitate to contact MAI recruitment staff if you would like to discuss your particular situation.

I'm Interested in a Position, What Steps Can I Take to Prepare Myself?

VetsWork GreenCorps is operated out of a very remote location (Ukiah, OR) and is physically demanding. Applicants are encouraged to research about the local offerings and determine if they are physically able to participate. Some things to consider are:

- It is extremely important to begin physical fitness training at least 2 months before starting the program. This should include running, lifting weights, and carrying loads heavy (40+ lbs) long distances. Also to note, Ukiah, OR is located at 3,400 ft in elevation, and this may affect performance until the participant is acclimated.
- Accessibility to medical facilities, grocery stores, and other personal services. A vehicle may be required to access services and off-time recreation
- Airport locations
- Internet
- Weather conditions
- Community / social activities

Many of these questions can also be answered by the Site Supervisor during the interview stage. Applicants should research ahead of time and have specific questions to ask during interviews. Other resources to consider are: local Facebook groups, Chambers of Commerce and town or county websites. In some cases, Mt. Adams Institute staff can connect applicants with current or former Interns serving at a specific location.

*To note:

- The VetsWork GreenCorps experience can present some real (though temporary) challenges: little money, potential relocation, adapting to a new work culture, etc. The ultimate value of the program is the opportunity

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to learn new skills while demonstrating your value to a potential future employer. Getting your foot in the door and building relationships with supervisors and decision-makers is the key benefit as statistics demonstrate that over 50% of jobs come through personal connections.

- VetsWork GreenCorps participants will be exposed to a variety of situations which mimic real-world wildland firefighting scenarios. These scenarios can include noises (helicopters, flare guns, radio traffic), locations, gear, personnel, etc...which have the potential to trigger Post Traumatic Stress symptoms. You may not be made aware ahead of time that these potential triggers may be occurring. We don't know your history. We want you to be able to decide for yourself if you have any concerns.
- While VetsWork GreenCorps does not require a degree or prior related employment experience, it does require a desire to pursue this career field. The more experience you have in your personal and professional life, the more appealing you will be as a candidate. Your passion for working in natural resources and public lands will also set you apart.

If you have any other questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact our recruitment staff Katie Schmidt at katie@mtadamsinstitute.org or (503) 504 5994 Monday-Friday 9a-4p Pacific.