

mt. adams
INSTITUTE



2023

**VETSWORK: ENVIRONMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

PROPOSALS DUE July 8, 2022

About Mt. Adams Institute

WHAT IS MT. ADAMS INSTITUTE (MAI)?

The Mt. Adams Institute's mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through service learning, education, career development and research. To meet this mission, we operate: outdoor education and recreation programs for youth (Cascade Mountain School), career development internships for military veterans (VetsWork) and young adults (Public Lands Stewards), facilitate wilderness stewardship projects, and host groups at our 44 bed campus in Trout Lake, Washington on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Mt. Adams Ranger District.

WHAT IS AMERICORPS?

AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages more than 75,000 women and men in intensive service each year at more than 15,000 locations including nonprofits, schools and public agencies across the country. AmeriCorps Members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Members gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the Members and the communities they serve. www.nationalservice.gov

WHAT IS THE VETSWORK AMERICORPS PROGRAM?

VetsWork: Environment is a career development program for military Veterans interested in a career in natural resources management. VetsWork participants engage in an 11 month-long internship at a federal, state or local natural resource organization that blends hands-on experience with specific career development training. As a result, VetsWork participants increase their employment opportunities while improving public lands and other natural resources.

VetsWork AmeriCorps prioritizes the following environmental areas: *Improvement of Public Lands, Environmental Education, Increasing volunteerism (specifically veterans) in public lands management.*

WHO ARE MAI PROJECT PARTNERS?

Each year, VetsWork AmeriCorps staff and community select nonprofits and public agencies to be project partners via the Request for Proposal (RFP). Partners are natural resource/public lands management agencies and non-profit organizations with compelling project ideas that address unmet needs. Our partners identify strong supervisors who value mentoring, volunteerism and community service. Supervisors commit to coaching and positively influencing the career path of their VetsWork AmeriCorps Member. Eligible partners will:

- Create a well-defined project with realistic and measurable goals and outcomes
- Provide ongoing mentoring, direction and supervision
- Arrange Member workspace, resources and professional development opportunities

HOW DOES MAI SUPPORT OUR PARTNERS?

MAI prides itself in operating a unique and exemplary program that equally supports the career transition goals of our AmeriCorps members and the unmet needs of our partner agencies and organizations in the natural resources field. Staff will support partners in the following ways:

- Guide supervisors through recruitment, interviewing and selection process
- Manage Member payroll, benefits and programmatic reporting
- Offer flexible invoicing plans
- Coordinate Sponsor Orientation Trainings in preparation for the program and the Supervisor Orientation Day with Members
- Build Member leadership via Community Action Project, Quarterly POD Meetings and focused professional development at Quarterly Trainings
- Retain Members via site visits, evaluations, recognition events and ongoing support
- Resolve conflict using a team focused problem solving approach

MAI is an equal opportunity employer, and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, age, gender, gender identification, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, income, educational background, work experience, appearance, relationship or family status, political affiliation, religion, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability.

WHO ARE VETSWORK AMERICORPS MEMBERS?

VetsWork AmeriCorps staff and project partners collaboratively recruit for a diverse team of U.S. military veterans who bring a wide variety of experiences and interests from their military career and are passionate about transitioning to a career in the natural resources/public lands management arena. AmeriCorps Members commit to an 11-month term of service. AmeriCorps Members serve their sponsor organization while developing a strong, marketable skill set and professional network.

WHAT IS THE VETSWORK TERM OF SERVICE?

VetsWork AmeriCorps Members begin their term of service in early February or March and end in mid-December or January, depending on your regional cohort (See Submission Requirements chart below). Members spend a minimum of 80% of their term with their supervisor and up to 20% of their term developing career oriented skills.

WHAT ARE THE AMERICORPS MEMBER BENEFITS?

AmeriCorps Members serving fulltime (1700 hours over 45 weeks) receive a taxable living allowance of approximately \$22,500 (\$500 per week) and may be eligible for medical insurance, loan forbearance and child care reimbursement. Members also receive a Segal Education Award of \$6,895 that may be used to help cover the costs of education or to repay qualified student loans. Members also receive quarterly professional workshops focused on transitioning their military and VetsWork experience into the civilian workforce.

Members have the opportunity to devote up to 20% of their term of service to learning activities including networking events, workshops, conferences and self-directed trainings.

Partner Eligibility

1. Partner organization is one of the following:
 - 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
 - Public school, school district, or Educational Service District (ESD)
 - Government agency (city, county, regional, state or federal)
2. Proposal clearly demonstrates that Member activities address a significant unmet need within one of the following focus areas:
 - Improving Public Lands
 - Increasing Volunteerism (especially veterans)
 - Environmental Education
3. Proposed service activities are **achievable** and clearly defined in the *Performance Measurement Worksheet*.
4. Partners will commit to hosting a Member for the full 45-week term of service beginning in **February/March, depending on your regional cohort**.
5. Member position will not duplicate routine staff functions or displace paid employees.
6. Member position will include engaging volunteers that support service activities.
7. Partner will have a Drug Free Work Place Policy and a Non-Discrimination Policy.
8. Partner will contribute a **\$29,003 cash match (\$29,503 for regional cohorts outside of OR and WA to cover travel expenses)** to be billed in January, unless otherwise arranged. For federal partners, MAI employs a monthly advanced payment option.
9. Partner will provide a valid certificate of liability insurance (or a letter stating self-insurance) with the completed application.
10. Partner will provide proof of 501(c)(3) status, if applicable, with the completed application.
11. Member position must not include any of the *Prohibited Activities* as outlined on page 5 (below).
12. Partner will identify the direct site supervisor (Page 1 of application) and will ensure his/her attendance at the Sponsor Orientation Day. This will require a full day of attendance (See Submission Requirements chart below for specific dates) and may necessitate travel and/or overnight lodging.

Prohibited Activities

Federal law and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) policy prohibit AmeriCorps programs and Members from engaging in certain activities while using CNCS funds or on CNCS time. Members are not prohibited from engaging in any of these activities on their own time. Examples of prohibited activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- 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 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;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to:
 - i. a business organized for profit;
 - ii. a labor union;
 - iii. a partisan political organization;
 - iv. a non-profit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent Members from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken on their own initiative; and
 - v. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support the religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such activities as CNCS may prohibit.
- l. 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. 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-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Non-Duplication

CNCS assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, CNCS assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

Prohibited Activities

Non-Displacement

Programs may not permit a Member to fill in for an absent employee. By law, Members may not under any circumstances perform services, duties, or activities that had been assigned to an employee or to an employee who has recently resigned or has been discharged. Programs may not use a Member in a way that will displace an employee or position or infringe on an employee's promotional opportunities. Provisions include:

- a. An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving CNCS assistance;
- b. An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving CNCS assistance;
- c. A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual;
- d. A participant in a program receiving CNCS assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee;
- e. A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that –
 - i. Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
 - ii. Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures
- f. A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any -
 - i. Presently employed worker;
 - ii. Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - iii. Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - iv. Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - v. Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

Supervisor Role

Hosting a VetsWork AmeriCorps Member is a unique opportunity for organizations to address unmet organizational needs while providing a meaningful service and career development experience for the member. Below is an overview of supervisor requirements.

SUPERVISION + MENTORING

- Provide the Member with an experienced and accessible supervisor for the full term of service.
- Supervisor will participate in all three Supervisor Orientation Webinars prior to the commencement of Member Orientation in February/March. **Supervisor will attend *Mentorship Connections: Values Based Mentorship with Members on designated day* (See Submission Requirements chart below).**
- Meet with the Member at least **one hour each week** to provide direction and share resources.
- Facilitate a thorough Member onboarding using the MAI checklist as a guide.
- Support the Member in identifying professional development opportunities.
- Support the Member's participation in MAI POD Meetings, Service Events, CAP, and Professional Development activities.

PROJECT SUPPORT

- Develop a well-defined, monthly project work plan with clear goals, activities and outcomes.
- Arrange office space and equipment for the Member to successfully perform service (i.e. work station, telephone, computer/email and internet.)
- Provide transportation for the Member during established service hours in accordance with the policies of the partner organization.
- Provide a vehicle, bus pass, or reimburse the Member for travel costs related to service.
- Support the policy that Members wear appropriate AmeriCorps identifiers while serving and display the provided AmeriCorps placard in public view at project location.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

- Work with MAI recruitment staff to ensure that the opportunity is broadcast widely.
- Interview candidates that have been screened by MAI recruitment staff.
- Select your candidate; communicate that choice to MAI recruitment staff so an offer can be extended.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Establish clear guidelines and rules that ensure safety of the member at your site.
- Consider safety trainings, certifications, site permits, waivers and emergency procedures.

REPORTING

- Develop realistic outcomes and define on the Performance Measurements Worksheet.
- Develop a realistic strategy for the Member to meet or exceed Performance Measures.
- Participate in fall and spring site visits with MAI Program Director and/or Coordinator.
- Participate in winter and summer evaluation with the Member using MAI forms.
- Evaluate the VetsWork AmeriCorps program at the end of term.
- Approve monthly timesheets (including any necessary edits) prior to the 4th of each month.
- Approve and submit member's monthly site report.

Partner Selection Criteria

New proposals will be evaluated by staff on the criteria below.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- Project directly supports the organization's mission and long-term vision.
- Partner organization has demonstrated the ability to plan and execute the project.
- Project does not replace, displace or duplicate an existing worker or position (see *Prohibited Activities* on page 5).
- Partner understands the partnership with MAI and can clearly communicate the AmeriCorps Member's role to its constituents.
- Partner demonstrates clear understanding around supervising an AmeriCorps Member for the full term of service.

QUALITY OF PROJECT

- Project addresses at least two MAI Performance Measures and meets MAI's eligibility requirements.
- Proposal demonstrates that the project will address member career development and support public lands / natural resources.
- Proposal includes clear goals, activities and outcomes.

EVALUATION

- Proposal includes strong plan for monitoring and managing Member success.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- *Performance Measurement Worksheet* clearly proposes and defines project outcomes.

BENEFIT TO MEMBER

- Proposal includes a commitment to the member's professional development.
- Partner identifies solutions for complicating factors to success including low cost or free housing options within the organization of local community.
- Proposal demonstrates equal commitment to both supporting the member's professional development and achieving the unmet needs of the sponsor agency.

Position Description Guidelines

Use the following information and examples to guide you in creating a compelling position description that is specific to your organization and to the project. **Partners are not limited to the examples provided below.**

POSITION TITLE

*In 46 characters or less, create a position title that is **three words** or less. Examples include:*

INCREASING VOLUNTEERISM

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Community Engagement Specialist
- Community Partnership Coordinator
- Volunteer and Partnership Coordinator

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Community Outreach Coordinator
- Ecology Educator
- Water Quality Educator
- Watershed Education Coordinator
- Youth Crew Leader
- Environmental Education Coordinator

PUBLIC LANDS IMPROVEMENT

- Invasive Species Specialist
- Backcountry Ranger
- Trails Stewardship Specialist
- Prairie Restoration Coordinator
- Community Stewardship Coordinator
- Restoration Volunteer Coordinator
- Restoration Project Specialist

PROJECT SPONSOR

Provide the name of the partner organization and the website where applicants can learn more about the organization.

PROJECT LOCATION ADDRESS

Provide the physical address of the primary duty station or office location. If your project will require the Member to report to more than one location on a regular basis, list each location.

PROJECT SPONSOR MISSION

This is your stated agency/organization mission.

POSITION SUMMARY

In 150 words or less, summarize the goals of the position. Prioritize these goals and assign approximate percentage of time the Member can expect to spend on each goal.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide up to 10 general responsibilities of the position. Examples include:

IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS

- Apply chemical and mechanical strategies for invasive species removal
- Restore native riparian vegetation
- Clear trails of downed trees using double and single-buck saws
- Obliterate trails to reduce erosion in sensitive areas

- Collaborate with staff to plan and implement restoration and monitoring projects.

INCREASE VOLUNTEERISM

- Work with local organizations to recruit volunteers for specific projects
- Develop a cadre of contacts for volunteer recruitment
- Engage local military veterans in volunteer projects
- Plan for, implement and assess the success of volunteer projects

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Plan and lead environmental education activities for K-12 students.
- Plan and lead natural area tours and environmental workshops for youth.
- Coordinate after-school, weekend and spring break environmental education activities
- Research volunteer needs and create volunteer leadership opportunities.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Provide up to 9 requirements specific to the position. Examples include:

- Desire to promote environmental stewardship.
- Demonstrates independence, motivation and resourcefulness.
- Successfully pass fingerprint criminal background check through the project partner.
- Experience with intercultural communication
- Ability to drive a large vehicle such as a 15 passenger van and/or four-wheel drive vehicles.
- Personal vehicle is required for service activities and mileage reimbursement is provided.
- Must have a valid driver's license, clean driving record (in accordance with organizational policy) and ability to provide documentation in a timely manner.
- Ability to successfully pass a drug test (random or otherwise) conducted by project partner.
- Travel and attend meetings in various parts of the region.
- Ability and willingness to serve outdoors, in inclement weather and lift up to 40 lbs.
- Willingness to apply herbicide, operate small engine tools (chainsaw, brush cutter, etc.)
- Able to take the lead on development of individual learning goals, project goals, measurable outcomes, timelines and reporting.
- Communicate and interact in a positive, professional manner with various populations, such as project partner(s), staff, stakeholders, volunteers, youth and the general public.
- Serve occasional evenings and weekends.
- Desire to promote environmental stewardship to underserved communities.
- A commitment to the goals of <insert partner organization name>
- Able to endure strenuous and repetitive physical activity involving lifting up to 50 lbs.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Provide up to 7 preferred qualifications specific to the position. These should be skills that are not essential to the position, but would be an added benefit. Examples include:

- Background in backcountry travel
- Strong connection to the natural world
- Interest or experience in natural resources and/or climate issues.
- Familiarity with GIS
- Education or experience with invasive species

- Any combination of experience and education equivalent to 2-4 years.

MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE

List any benefits that the partner organization will provide to the Member. Examples include:

- Organizational Training and Certifications.
- Transportation stipend.
- Free or reduced cost housing is provided for this position.
- Opportunities to attend conferences and events.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

List all that apply. Examples include:

- Organizational vehicle is available for service activities. Member will be covered by organization's vehicle insurance policy.
- Project site is accessible by public transportation.
- Project site is not accessible by public transportation.
- Personal vehicle is required or recommended to for service activities - Member will be reimbursed by project partner.
- Bus tickets are available for service activities and will be provided by the project partner.
- Monthly/annual transit passes are available for service activities and will be provided by the project partner.

Submission Requirements

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

MAI requires a **\$26,000 (\$26,500 for regional cohorts outside of OR and WA to cover travel expenses)** cash match per 1700 hour Member. Invoices are emailed in January. For federal partners, MAI employs a monthly advanced payment option.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

APPLICATION:

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS: Please send Proof of 501(c)3, Liability Certificate/Letter of Self-Insurance letter to aaron@mtadamsinstitute.org.

SUBMISSION: All applications should be submitted in **Word** format to aaron@mtadamsinstitute.org

SELECTION PROCESS

REVIEW: Staff will fully review all RFPs for new and returning partners

REVISIONS: Proposal acceptance may be contingent upon applicant revisions

FUNDING: Selected projects are pending MAI's continued funding

REGIONAL COHORT PLACEMENT: Upon final selection you will be notified of your cohort assignment. Timelines associated with that cohort will then be applied to your application. If you are submitting from outside of these cohorts, please contact Aaron Stanton at aaron@mtadamsinstitute.org.

PNW – OR, WA, AK

Central – MO, IL, IN, AR, TX

Southeast - WV, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL

PROPOSAL TIMELINE

RFP RELEASED	May 18, 2021
COMPLETE PROPOSALS DUE BY 5 PM PST	July 2, 2021
PARTNER APPLICANTS NOTIFIED	By August 1, 2021
MEMBER RECRUITMENT WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL (ALL SUPERVISORS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE)	September, 2021 Time TBD
SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL (ALL SUPERVISORS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE)	December, 2021 Time TBD
SECOND ORIENTATION WEBINAR/CONFERENCE CALL (ALL SUPERVISORS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE)	January, 2022 Time TBD
SUPERVISORS DAY AT ORIENTATION (ALL SUPERVISORS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE)	PNW Region- Feb 10, 2021 Corbett, OR Central and Southeast Region – March 10, 2021 (Location TBD)
MEMBER TERM OF SERVICE	PNW Region – Feb 7, 2021 - Dec 16, 2021 Central and Southeast Region – March 7, 2021 – January 13, 2023.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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