

Alpine Achievers Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions for
AmeriCorps Applicants



AmeriCorps



What is the region like?

The San Luis Valley (SLV) is a large, wide-open, alpine (elevation 7,500 ft) valley in Southern Colorado. It is beautiful and very rural. To the northeast lies the Arkansas River Valley. Towns in both valleys tend to be small (all have fewer than 20,000 people, some as few as 300 people) and they're spread out by an hour or more in drive time. Each town has a unique culture, political climate, and landscape that reflect the farming, ranching, and mining history of the Southwest. The summers are warm and dry, and the winters can be very cold. There are many recreational opportunities including hiking and biking trails, the Arkansas and Rio Grande Rivers for floating or tubing, and several awesome ski areas. Living in rural Colorado provides a slow-paced lifestyle that is difficult to find elsewhere. For more information, please see our document, [“Living and Serving in Southern Colorado”](#).

If I decide to apply, what happens next?

Once your application and resume are received, we'll review them to determine if you are a candidate for an interview. If you are, we will then reach out to you to schedule a phone interview. Following that are reference checks, and if it is determined you'd be a good fit for our organization, we will make an offer for a position. Offers are usually made within two weeks of your interview date.

What can I expect if I accept a position with AAI?

You can expect to make a positive impact on youth in Southern Colorado and gain experience as a professional in education and youth development. If you're open to it, your year of service will also provide you with many opportunities for personal growth, learning new hobbies, and connecting with people who have different worldviews and lived experiences.

If I'm offered a position as an AAI AmeriCorps Member, when would I need to arrive in Colorado?

In 2024, we have two start dates: January 22nd is the first day of orientation for the January 2024 through July 2024 term (with option to renew) and August 26th is the first day of orientation for the August 2024- July 2025 term. You should plan to arrive at least a few days prior, to move into your housing and get your bearings. Your AAI housing will be available either on January 18th or August 22nd, 2024.

Does AAI provide housing?

Yes. Members are required to live in AAI housing and with other AAI AmeriCorps members.

AAI contracts with landlords and subleases houses and apartments to members. Residences vary from two-person to four-person occupancy. Members sign a lease and pay a security deposit of \$300, and a monthly rent of approximately \$554* (which includes basic utilities). Rent is automatically taken from members' living stipend every 2 weeks. Payment plans for the security deposit are available based on need. All housing includes a bed and is either partially or completely furnished. Wi-Fi is available at all locations, although it is up to members to purchase access. Free mail delivery is available at some locations, but not all; members may rent a post office box, if they choose. AAI housing does not accommodate pets (including ESAs), partners, other family members, or friends.

*Rent for the 2024-2025 term will be \$328 every two weeks, or approximately \$656 per month.

Can I have a pet?

We adore pets, but unfortunately, AAI housing does not accommodate pets (including ESAs).

Can I bring my firearm?

No. The possession of any firearm, ammunition, or other weapon is strictly prohibited.

Is there relocation assistance?

Yes, travel assistance for incoming members may be available based on individual need. Each year, a small pool of funds becomes available, which AAI may use to help new members relocate to Colorado. Therefore, we ask that only those who truly require financial travel assistance request it. Applications for assistance will be shared after hiring.

Do I need to have my own vehicle?

While a personal vehicle is not required, it is a great benefit, given our location. There is essentially no public transportation in our rural communities, and the towns we serve are very small and some are spaced out across relatively great distances. Bringing a bicycle may be an option in some towns, although winter temperatures can be as low as - 20°F, and even colder temperatures are not uncommon in some locations. AAI does provide limited community vehicle access for qualifying AmeriCorps members. These vehicles are for transportation to and from AAI-sanctioned trainings and events only, not for commuting to service sites. Daily commuting options may include carpooling with fellow members or site staff, as well as school buses for those serving in schools.

What sort of orientation is there?

Your AmeriCorps cohort will include 40-50 other new members. Each year, our largest orientation occurs in early-mid August, with a smaller, shorter orientation for members who start in January. Orientation includes an intensive initial four or five days with overnights in pre-arranged communal housing. Orientation covers a wide range of information about the area, expectations and values of Alpine Achievers Initiative, what to expect as you get started at your site and finalizing any onboarding paperwork.

How is my placement at a host site determined?

After accepting a position with AAI, we will send you a survey to assess your working and living preferences. You will also receive a portfolio of site descriptions which will allow for a deeper understanding of the different service opportunities. You will rank your preferences for where you would like to serve and live. We make placements based on the needs of the various host sites in combination with your preferences and strengths. We do our best to make excellent matches.

Are all member positions the same?

No. Responsibilities vary depending on the host site. Duties may include full-time extracurricular programming, full-time academic interventions, or a mixture of both.

How is the living stipend distributed?

Every two weeks, a living stipend is deposited directly into your bank account. For January starts, after taxes and rent, the amount deposited directly into each member's bank account each month will total roughly \$770 (actual totals depend on rental deposit plan and other payment options). For the 24/25 (August starts) term the approximate amount after taxes and rent will be \$799.

Is there a dress code?

Yes. When actively serving, AmeriCorps Members are expected to wear one of their "AmeriCorps Greens." These include t-shirts, hoodies, and polos with the AmeriCorps logo that are supplied by AAI with no charge. In addition, members are expected to dress in a professional manner that is acceptable at their specific site. Each site has a stated dress code, which is normally dress-casual.

How much do I get for the Education Award?

After successful completion of the term, you will be eligible for a Segal Education Award. The award value is based on your term length. For January starts (900 hours) the amount is \$3,447.50, pre-tax. For the 2024/25 term starting in August (1700 hours) you will receive \$7,395, pre-tax. The amount of the Segal Education Award is determined annually based on the Pell Grant.

How is my Education Award received?

Your education award is received after completion of your full term of service through the National Service. Navigating this process will be covered in your training.

What can my Education Award be used for?

You can use your education award to pay for educational expenses such as tuition, student fees, books, or other course-related supplies, or to repay qualified student loans. Qualified courses include most post-secondary colleges, universities, and technical schools. Qualified student loans include loans backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act

(except PLUS Loans to parents of students), loans under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Service Health Act, and loans made by a state agency.

Are there other perks?

Yes! You will receive professional development training such as restorative practices, trauma-informed care, mental health first aid, mandatory reporter, creating safe and inclusive spaces for youth, and more! Some host sites sponsor additional training including first aid/CPR or Wilderness First Aid. You will be part of an amazing community in your town and in the AAI family. You will have the opportunity to participate in free outdoor recreation excursions, such as hiking, camping, backpacking, and snowshoeing with access to our “gear library” via our Backyard to Backcountry Program. You are also eligible for health insurance, SNAP food stamps, interest deferment, and loan forbearance for qualified student loans.