

The Benefits of a Service Year

A service year is an experience unlike any other. It allows you transform your life and gain valuable skills and experience for your next step in life, while also making an impact in ways that can truly transform a community

Transform Your Life. Find Your Passion.

A countless number of service year alums credit their service year experience as a pathway to discovering their life's passion. Whether it's in education, healthcare, technology, or policy and government – alums have gone on to pursue successfully future education or careers in many different fields.

Develop Valuable Skills

Every service year is different, but each opportunity allows you to develop leadership and professional skills that you can take with you after your year of service. Whether it's leading a team, managing volunteers, managing a major project, working with youth, rebuilding after a natural disaster, or even building a home – the skills you develop during your service year can be utilized for any future education or career.

Financial Benefits

A service year is a paid opportunity. The level of pay varies depending on each program and length of the service period. Some opportunities come with additional benefits, including: health insurance, dental and vision insurance, housing assistance, childcare, and more.

For specific questions about a specific service year program, please reach out to the organization directly.

Career Benefits

Service year alums have gone onto successful careers in a variety of fields, including technology, consulting, education, government, nonprofits, and even the arts. That's because employers view service year alums as motivated, flexible, and outcome-oriented leaders who have developed valuable skills and training. The employers that are leading the charge to hire service year alums are designated as [Employers of National Service](#).

What is Employers of National Service?

Employers of National Service connects service year alums from AmeriCorps and Peace Corps with employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, including Disney, Comcast, Delta Airlines, the National Park Service, and many more.

Educational Benefits

Many service year alums have used their service year experience as a stepping stone to their next level of education. Are you a high school graduate who wants to take a year before pursuing a college degree? Are you a college graduate who wants an opportunity to make real change in a real community? Do you want more experience before pursuing a graduate degree? A service year could be right for you.

Just like employers, higher education institutions and graduate programs value the skills and experiences developed by service year alums.

Education Award

Even better, many service year participants are eligible for an education award that can be used for future school or to pay back students loans. One cool thing to keep in mind is that over 100 colleges and universities double – and sometimes even triple – the education award, waive registration fees, provide course credit, and even have service-related scholarships! See the next section to see more information about the education award and student loans.

Service year corps members are eligible to receive an education award if they do a service year with AmeriCorps. The amount of a full-time education award is the same as the maximum value of the Pell Grant for the award year in which the service year is approved.

In other words, as of October 2016, you can earn \$5,815 if you do a full-time service year or work the equivalent of 1700 hours. For part-time or 900 hour terms, the education award is pro-rated,

Since the amount of the Pell Grant changes every year, the education award amount changes every year as well.

[You can read more about the education award here.](#)

Student Loan Benefits

Individuals who do a service year in an approved AmeriCorps program may be eligible to temporarily postpone repaying their student loans while they are serving. This is called loan forbearance. While an individual's loan is in forbearance, they are not required to make payments. [Learn more about deferring your student loans here.](#)