



VetsWork AmeriCorps Internship

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is VetsWork?

VetsWork is an AmeriCorps program connecting US military veterans with federal, state, and local public land management and natural resource agencies for the dual purposes of: 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 and organizations.

VetsWork is a 45 week long internship program in which participants learn new skills, gain new knowledge and build professional contacts within the public lands / natural resources management / environmental sector. Internship partners include U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State and County Parks, and local environmental organizations.

The goal of VetsWork is to help participants increase their opportunity to secure permanent jobs and assist potential employers seeking qualified veteran candidates.

Q: What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. Since the program's founding 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 members by providing pathways for people entering the workforce. AmeriCorps places thousands of people into intensive service positions where they learn valuable work skills, earn money for education, and develop an appreciation for citizenship.

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

Q: 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 operates in 13 states across the country. Learn more at: www.mtadamsinstitute.org MAI designed, developed and manages the VetsWork program.



Q: Is the position full-time?

Yes. VetsWork interns will work an average of 40 hours per week. Individual positions might vary in how and when that time is spread throughout the week. Some interns may work four 10 hour days; others will have scheduled hours on weekends; and still others may work 7 days straight and then have 5 days off.

Q: Do VetsWork Interns get paid?

Interns earn a living stipend of \$300/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 = \$1,200 (pre-tax); five weeks = \$1,500 (pre-tax). Stipends are direct deposited on the 10th of the following month.

Q: Can I use my G.I. Bill benefits while in the program?

Yes, VetsWork is an apprenticeship program approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Labor. Members with G.I. Bill benefits may be able to dual enroll as an apprentice and access their Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) of up to approximately \$2400 per month. Actual benefits vary by individuals' qualified benefits.

Q: What are the others benefits of VetsWork?

In addition to the living stipend, VetsWork interns earn an education award of \$6,095 upon satisfactory completion of the program, health insurance, child-care assistance, qualification to apply for food stamps and loan forbearance.

Another less tangible, but potentially invaluable benefit is the networking and resume building opportunities available to VetsWork interns. Interns will meet many people and be exposed to a variety of positions.

Q: How long are the internships?

VetsWork is a 10.5 month program (45 weeks). Interns must complete at least 1700 hours of service during that time. This averages out to be 40 hours per week.

Q: What are VetsWork internships like?

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. Participants will receive on-the-job training while completing their duties. Participants engage with MAI program staff on professional development workshops throughout the year.

Q: What positions are available?

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.

For the most up-to-date open positions, please visit our jobs page at <https://mtadamsinstitute.org/internships/> or contact our Recruitment Coordinator, Katie Schmidt, at: katie@mtadamsinstitute.org or (509) 395-3465.

Q: Where are the positions located?

VetsWork internship positions are located throughout Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Some positions are in the heart of major cities and suburban communities, while others are situated in remote, rural locations.

For the most up-to-date service location see our jobs page: <https://mtadamsinstitute.org/internships/>.

Q: Where do VetsWork participants live?

Housing depends on each service location. Participants are responsible for securing housing, but the local supervisor may assist with the process. Some positions have on-site options. Details for each position can be located in the position descriptions found on the jobs page: <https://mtadamsinstitute.org/internships/>

Q: Will I get a job at the end of the internship?

There is no guarantee of employment when the program is completed, but VetsWork 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 VetsWork interns more likely to get hired.

Q: I have a family. Can they come with me?

Yes. Families may join you, but you may have to seek out your own housing. Potential housing provided by specific internships sites is often very limited and many times cannot accommodate families.

Many current and former VetsWork interns have made this work with a family. Although it presents some more logistical challenges, they did find a way to address them. For more information, contact our Recruitment Coordinator, Katie Schmidt, at: katie@mtadamsinstitute.org or (509) 395-3465.

Q: Can I work or go to a school while participating in the program?

It is extremely difficult to fulfill the obligations of the program and be in school or working another job.

Q: What agencies partner with VetsWork?

Current and former partners include: Gifford Pinchot National Forest (NF), Siuslaw NF, Umatilla NF, Wallowa Whitman NF, Deschutes NF, Malheur NF, , Mark Twain NF, Shawnee NF, King County Conservation District,



Ouachita NF, Mark Twain NF, Shawnee NF, Hoosier NF, Monongahela NF, George Washington and Jefferson NF, Nantahala NF, Sumter NF and the Chatahoochee-Oconee NF.

Q: What are the physical requirements?

Physical requirements vary with each position. Some positions require 40 hours per week of desk time. Others are very physically demanding, and all work takes place outdoors in rugged wilderness. Many of the positions have components of both. All position descriptions on our jobs page <https://mtadamsinstitute.org/internships/> clearly explain the physical requirements of each position. It is important to be realistic about what you are capable of doing.

Q: 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 do need to be honest and realistic about your capabilities. We and our partners provide reasonable accommodation.

Q: Who can apply for VetsWork?

Applicants must be a U.S. Military Veteran (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, or Army Reserve), 21+ years or older with a DD 214 (Honorable and General Under Honorable Conditions on a case by case basis).

Q: Why is this program just for veterans?

VetsWork 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.

Q: 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 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) on your AmeriCorps application 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.

Q: I am an active member of the National Guard/Reserves and have training obligations.

Generally, the Reserves of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard require reservists to serve one weekend a month plus 12 to 15 days a year (hereafter referred to as the two-week active duty service). If members have a choice of when to fulfill their annual two-week active duty requirement, they should do so when it will not disrupt their

AmeriCorps service. In instances where the dates of active duty are



inflexible and conflict with AmeriCorps service, members will be granted a leave of absence for the two-week period of active duty service in the Reserves.

Members may not receive time-off for additional Reserves-related service beyond the two-week active duty service. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves. Members will receive credit for AmeriCorps service hours during their two weeks of active duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps service. The member would receive credit for the number of hours he or she would have served during that period had there been no interruption. For example, if a full-time member is signed up to serve 30 hours of AmeriCorps service one week and 40 hours of AmeriCorps service on the following week, she or he would receive 70 hours of AmeriCorps service credit for the two weeks of active duty service regardless of the actual number of hours served in the Reserves.

Members will continue to receive the living stipend for the two-week period of active duty.

