

What’s the difference between Response Corps and AmeriCorps at Common Threads? Which one should I be applying for?

Background

When Common Threads first started hosting AmeriCorps members, our focus was on *food education*. Yet, as we have evolved as an organization, we have continued to direct more of our programming resources toward youth who face the most significant barriers to accessing healthy food and positive outdoor recreation.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the many cracks and injustices in our food and social support systems and has challenged us to think deeply and creatively about how to best meet the hunger, connection, and recreational needs of our community’s most vulnerable youth. More families are depending more heavily than ever on emergency food support. More youth are feeling disconnected and isolated. In response to these challenges, Serve WA (the state commission for community service) and the Schultz Family Foundation have collaborated to create the [WA COVID Response Corps](#), a state-wide initiative whose purpose is to address community needs resulting from COVID across the state of Washington while supporting the growth and development of participating Response Corps members. In the first cohort of Response Corps, which launched in the fall of 2020, Common Threads hosted 22 members, 19 of whom served in Bellingham and three of whom served at partner sites (Farmer Frog and Walla Walla Valley Farm to School). For the second cohort of Response Corps, launching in the fall of 2021, Common Threads will host nine Response Corps members, most likely three in Whatcom County and six at partner nonprofits across the state.

FAQ

What is the difference in expectations between Response Corps and AmeriCorps both for members and for host sites?

Response Corps	AmeriCorps
All members - regardless of Response Corps or AmeriCorps must meet citizenship requirements, pass background checks, and refrain from AmeriCorps prohibited activities. See Serve Washington’s Member Service Agreement Template for specifics.	
All host site - regardless of Response Corps or AmeriCorps are expected to participate in data collection to meet statewide program goals	
Members must be between the ages of 17-25. The funding for this program is specifically focused on youth development.	Members must be over the age of 17

>25% or Response Corps members must be BIPOC, and % of members who identify as low income must reflect the demographic of the communities served	No requirement on racial or socioeconomic identities of members
Members receive a living allowance equivalent to 80% of a full time living wage (based on 2080 full time employment) for a single person with no children in the county of service <i>not to exceed the maximum AmeriCorps Living Allowance of \$30,200/year</i>	Members receive a living allowance equivalent to 65% of a full time living wage (based on 2080 full time employment) for a single person with no children in the county of service
Focus is on COVID related food access/food sovereignty issues for community members in medium to high social vulnerability index	Focus is more broadly on Food Education and Food Access, no restriction on who may be served
Host site fees range from \$17,874 - \$25,000 depending on county of service (with King and Snohomish Counties landing on the high end of this range) but specific grant funds are available to defray these costs for BIPOC led and BIPOC serving organizations, and organizations new to AmeriCorps	Host site fees range from \$17,874 - \$25,000 depending on county of service (with King and Snohomish Counties landing on the high end of this range)
Members expected to participate in trainings provided by host site, Common Threads, and State-Wide trainings specific to the COVID Response Corps	Members expected to participate in trainings provided by host site and Common Threads

Although each host site will have a slightly different position description, here is the [Response Corps position](#) and the [AmeriCorps Food Educator position](#) for service in Bellingham/Whatcom County as an example.

Why is the compensation different between Food Educators and Response Corps members?

The Response Corps has different expectations and therefore different compensation. See [this memo](#) from Serve WA for more details.

While the above is for all host sites, the following information is specific to those members serving with Common Threads [in Bellingham](#) (if you're a host site or a member applying for a host site outside of Bellingham, feel free to disregard!)

Each Response Corps member assigned in Whatcom County will serve in a neighborhood or county region identified as ripe with opportunities for decreasing barriers to food access, food education, and food sovereignty for youth and their families. The Response Corps members will serve side by side with Common Threads' existing Food Education Corps but will not be the primary educator at any school site.

Response Corps members will need to think creatively about how to best leverage existing long term relationships and emerging opportunities to nourish community through increased access to, awareness of, and excitement about healthy food.

This is a new position, and the successful candidates will bring a pioneering spirit, a willingness to try things and fail, a strong understanding of the importance of relationships, and an active curiosity about barriers (both apparent and hidden) to food access.

If I've already applied for the Food Educator position, can I also be considered for the Response Corps position?

Yes. In order to be considered, please submit a cover letter specifically addressing your interest in Response Corps to hr@commonthreadsfarm.org. If you have already applied for a Food Educator position, you do not need to submit a new resume or application.

If I'm returning for a second year at Common Threads, do I get priority consideration for a Response Corps position?

No. All applicants for the Response Corps positions will be considered based on their merits.