



**AmeriCorps**  
Washington

## Response Corps Positions Now Open

**Do you care about Food Education and Food Access? Do you love making a difference in the world? Apply to serve as a Response Corps member at Common Threads!**

**Dates of service:** August 23, 2021 - August 12, 2022

**Total amount of service:** 1700 hours minimum (full time!)

**To apply,** complete the [Response Corps application](#), and send a resume, cover letter, and two letters of reference to [hr@commonthreadsfarm.org](mailto:hr@commonthreadsfarm.org)

*Please note: if you have already applied to the AmeriCorps food educator position, there is no need to resubmit an application. However, an updated cover letter expressing your interest in Response Corps specifically is required in order for your application to be considered.*

### About Common Threads

Common Threads connects kids to healthy food in the garden, in the kitchen, and at the table. We want kids to grow up making food choices that are good for their bodies, their communities, and the environment. Founded in 2007 and based in Bellingham, Washington, Common Threads is a grassroots, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes a “seed to table” approach to food production, good nutrition, and environmental stewardship. With the exception of COVID programming, most of our programs take place on public school grounds, during the school day. Common Threads also runs after-school gardening and cooking programs at schools and affordable housing complexes, and spring/summer camps at an urban farm site.

Even before the COVID pandemic, Common Threads had identified a need to direct more of our programming resources toward youth who face the most significant barriers to accessing healthy food and positive outdoor recreation, and had begun offering summer and after school programs to youth in affordable housing complexes, at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, and in the Juvenile Detention School.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the many cracks and injustices in our food and social support systems and has helped us to think even more 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.

While we know lots of people are yearning for life to “go back to normal”, at Common Threads we have embraced the opportunity to move forward toward “normal 2.0.” Both COVID and the national reckoning with systemic racism have challenged us to keep our innovation and service skills strong and nimble.

## Responsibilities:

Each Response Corps (RC) member will serve in a neighborhood identified as ripe with opportunities for decreasing barriers to food access, food education, and food sovereignty for youth and their families. The RC member will serve side by side with Common Threads' existing Food Education Corps, and 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. Each Response Corps member will:

- Be assigned to a specific neighborhood or county region identified as facing higher barriers to food access
- Serve in close collaboration with multiple partners both internally (the perennial leadership team and school based AmeriCorps Food Educators) and externally (affordable housing sites, community centers, community gardens, partner nonprofits) to identify how best to leverage Common Threads existing programs and resources to increase food education and food access for youth and their families
- Act as the primary steward of at least one garden to maximize both its production and educational potential
- Act individually as the peer liaison to one Response Corps member serving in another part of the state, and collectively with other RC members to foster strong reciprocal learning opportunities between all Common Threads Response Corps host sites
- Act in a collaboration and support role with school-based food education programs
- Lead "camp-style" food education programs situated in assigned neighborhood after school and during winter, spring and summer school breaks
- Support emergency food production and distribution efforts including but not limited to meal production, packing, distribution, and lunch support
- Recruit and manage volunteers to support growing and teaching about food
- Manage administrative tasks, including email communications, data & story collection, and project prep time
- Support other relevant food education and food resiliency opportunities as they arise
- Bring an equity lens to all aspects of service
- Complete a minimum of 1700 hours of service (full time, 35+ hours per week) between August 23, 2021-August 12, 2022

Additionally, Response Corps members are expected to participate in state-wide Response Corps programming. Additional duties at the state-wide level include:

- Attending live monthly development trainings (via webinar) with other Response Corps members. The monthly sessions will equip the Response Corps members with additional skills and tools for professional and personal growth and development (including leadership, collaboration, communication, etc.) and for the completion of their capstone project.
- Participating in asynchronous monthly online professional development courses. The monthly online courses will equip Response Corps members with additional skills and tools for professional and personal growth and development (including leadership, collaboration, communication, etc.) and for the completion of their capstone project.
- Developing and completing a capstone project by the end of their Response Corps experience. The capstone may address topics including, but not limited to: raising youth awareness of community/national issues, the impact of national service on members and the communities they

serve, creating awareness about innovative programs and solutions to address community needs in communities with moderate to high levels of vulnerability.

- Attending virtual working group meetings or virtual conferences as needed to successfully develop and complete the capstone project.
- Presenting the capstone project to targeted audiences through online posting of completed capstone projects on various online platforms and/or virtual live presentations. Targeted audiences may include, but are not limited to: youth, AmeriCorps members, and state, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders.
- Participating in communications and program awareness activities, including amplification on social channels and story sharing opportunities (e.g. video/photography, interviews) as needed.

As a result of these additional responsibilities, the AmeriCorps member's living allowance will reflect a higher rate.

*\*Depending on the stage of the COVID pandemic, service opportunities will be a combination of virtual remote and in-person service that is likely outdoors, socially distanced, and masked. Service members will participate regularly in low-risk and infrequently in moderate risk activities. Common Threads cannot guarantee zero risk of exposure to COVID.*

## **Benefits:**

- Make a positive difference in your community during a time of uncertainty by getting healthy food into the hands of hungry kids and families
- Learn new skills and gain new experiences
- Make new personal and professional connections
- Receive a stipend of \$23,845.12 (\$1987/mo) before tax for full-time position (1700 hours).
- Receive an [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) from the National Service Trust in the amount of \$6,345 upon successful completion of service
- [Health care coverage](#) including [dental and vision](#)
- [Subsidized childcare](#) for qualified members
- [Basic Food Benefits](#) eligibility
- Access to an emergency assistance program
- Opportunity to learn and grow in the company of other passionate service members
- Federal Holidays excluding Martin Luther King Jr Day (additional time off approved on a case-by-case basis)
- Professional development including but not limited to:
  - **Farming & Gardening**- winterization, crop succession and rotation, drip irrigation, soil and compost stewardship, pruning, seeding and starts
  - **Strategies for fostering diversity, equity and inclusion**
  - **Professional skills** - communication styles, conflict resolution, using social media for social change, resume and cover letter writing, meeting facilitation, story-telling and virtual content creation

## **Skills and Qualifications**

Minimum requirements:

- A U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the U.S.
- At least 17 years of age but not older than 25 by August 23, 2021
- Have obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent (or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an Education Award)

- Satisfy the National Service Criminal History Check eligibility criteria
- Passion for and understanding of Common Threads' mission and programs
- Willing and able to serve in-person and remotely as COVID pandemic conditions demand in Bellingham and/or East Whatcom County
- Willing and able to travel to multiple service sites
- Willing to serve long hours, some of which will be outside in all weather
- Passionate, committed, creative, adaptable, detail-oriented, capable of working both independently and as a team
- Ability to create own structure within the day, serve independently, and be a proactive self-starter on projects
- Ability to ask for and offer help
- Basic computer skills

The ideal candidate will also bring:

- A high tolerance for ambiguity, and a creative and enterprising spirit
- Experience working with kids
- Knowledge and experience in the realms of gardening, farming, cooking and nutrition
- Experience volunteering and/or community organizing
- Familiarity with Google Suite and Zoom
- Proficiency in Spanish or Russian
- An awareness of what special skills, personal experiences or perspectives they bring to the team

### **To apply:**

- Fill out our [application online](#). If computer access is a barrier to applying, please contact us at [hr@commonthreadsfarm.org](mailto:hr@commonthreadsfarm.org) for a paper application.

This position is open until filled with an ideal start date of August 23, 2021

Common Threads is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, or marital status in employment or the provision of services. At Common Threads, we are actively committed to social equity and justice and strongly encourage candidates of all racial and gender identities, cultural and economic backgrounds, and of any sexual orientation to apply for employment and service opportunities. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment for staff and volunteers, and believe a diversity of voices and perspective is critical to fulfilling our mission.