

## NCAT ENERGY CORPS AMERICORPS PROGRAM 2015-2016 Host Site Application Instructions

### **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a project Host Site with the National Center for Appropriate Technology's Energy Corps AmeriCorps Program. Energy Corps is a state AmeriCorps program created to help communities address unmet energy needs. The Energy Corps program provides Host Sites with energetic and passionate Energy Corps members who will work locally to provide energy conservation education, community energy planning and organizing and hands on energy projects which promote sustainable energy practices. This document contains information for organizations and agencies in Montana interested in the service of committed and skilled Energy Corps members to implement local energy projects.

### **Background**

#### **National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)**

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) is a private, nonprofit (501c3) organization whose mission is "helping people by championing small-scale, local, and sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, promote healthy communities, and protect natural resources." Since 1976 NCAT has been serving economically disadvantaged people and communities to enhance their quality of life and their environment. The Energy Corps initiative is a continuation of NCAT's historical focus on fostering sustainable change by connecting people with local communities to develop energy solutions. More information about NCAT can be found at [www.ncat.org](http://www.ncat.org).

#### **AmeriCorps**

The Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS) and the Governor-appointed Montana Commission on Community Service were created in 1993 to promote and expand national service and volunteer opportunities in Montana. The Governor's Office of Community Service administers federal funding to AmeriCorps State programs in Montana. The federal funding is provided by the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#), an independent federal agency. The Corporation's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Throughout the country, Americans of all backgrounds are engaged in service to meet community needs. Thanks to a partnership between GOCS and NCAT, organizations and public agencies can expand their capacity through the Energy Corps program.

### **Energy Corps Objectives and 2015-2016 Performance Measures**

The Energy Corps program, composed of AmeriCorps members, provide support and outreach for individuals, families and communities struggling with energy costs by performing hands on energy assistance, energy-conservation education and community energy planning and organizing. By forming collaborations with local non-profit organizations, community action agencies, local governments and energy service organizations, Energy Corps fosters community sustainability by addressing the challenges of rising energy prices and global climate change. The Energy Corps simultaneously launches AmeriCorps members into green-collar career pathways, providing them with the essential elements for good and secure jobs in the growing clean energy economy.

For the 2014-2015 program year, the Energy Corps program is committed to reaching the following performance measure outputs and outcomes. **Energy Corps member activities proposed by host sites must include activities in at least two of the following three service areas:**

- **Hands on Energy Assistance**

*Output:* members will provide hands-on energy assistance to 500 entities to include low-income home residents, public schools and community buildings with a demonstrated need.

*Allowable Activities:* Hands-on energy assistance will include weatherization and conservation activities; energy assessments, audits and consultations; and alternative and renewable energy activities. **Activities must be targeted towards individual homes and result in an individualized assessment.**

*Outcome:* 75% of entities receiving hands on assistance will report that services received are of high quality.

*Data Collection:* Members and host sites will be required to provide lists of individuals/households served, locations, an overview of services provided, and surveys from service recipients indicating quality of service.

- **Energy Education and Outreach**

*Output:* members will create energy awareness through education and outreach activities.

Members will conduct educational presentations, events and trainings in energy efficient and environmentally conscious practices for 1,800 individuals.

*Allowable Activities:* An educational event or presentation that qualifies under this performance measure involves at least 20 minutes of structured interaction with the target population and an opportunity for feedback from that target population. Energy Corps members must play a lead role in presenting or facilitating the content of the educational event. Content must focus on sustainable energy, environmentally conscious practices and/or sustainability planning.

*Outcome:* 1,350 individuals attending educational presentations will demonstrate an increase in knowledge regarding sustainable energy resources, energy efficiency, and other environmentally conscious practices..

*Data Collection:* Members and host sites will be required to provide lists of individuals attending presentations or trainings, locations, an overview of training curriculum, and surveys from attendees indicating change in learning.

- **Green Jobs Training and Skills Development**

*Output:* Energy Corps members will participate in training to develop green collar job skills.

Each member will complete a minimum of 50 hours of training in energy topics provided by an experienced energy trainer to develop green collar jobs skills. NCAT will provide the majority of these training opportunities, but encourage host sites to offer additional trainings when possible.

*Allowable Activities:* Trainings and certifications that qualify under this performance measure must be specific to green job skills trainings that will be marketable for the member after their term of service.

*Outcome:* Members will increase knowledge of energy topics, indicated by pre-post survey questions.

*Data Collection:* NCAT will conduct pre and post surveying of members to gauge increases in

knowledge. Host Site Supervisors will complete mid-term and final evaluations of members to assess job knowledge and performance.

Applications including other proposed energy activities for members will be considered as long as activities also include a main component of two of the above listed performance measures.

### **Opportunities for partnerships**

NCAT invites organizations and agencies in Montana submit an application for one or more Energy Corps member slots for the 2015-2016 service term, September 2015 to August 2016. Eligible partners include non-profit organizations, state agencies and local governments, elementary and secondary schools, Indian tribes, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations or any combination of these or similar groups. Each member must serve a minimum of 1700 hours within the specified service term.

Though Energy Corps members may work on different tasks, all of the tasks must be aligned with the performance measures described above. Sample projects for Energy Corps members could include, but aren't limited to:

- Educating individuals about energy conservation or other environmentally conscious practices;
- Working with public housing authorities or community action agencies implementing green practices and improving energy efficiency in housing units
- Working with colleges, K-12 schools, or tribes interested in developing green campus/energy efficiency/renewable energy initiatives;
- Identifying the role of renewable energy opportunities relevant to the community.

### **Benefits to Host Sites**

Organizations, agencies and campuses that participate as host sites experience numerous benefits including:

- Access to a committed AmeriCorps member who will serve at your agency for 11 months
- Ability to expand collaboration with similar organizations to address community issues;
- Assistance in building community capacity to address energy problems;
- Opportunity to serve as a personal and professional mentor;
- Direct connection to the national service movement.

### **Benefits to Energy Corps members**

All Energy Corps members are enrolled in the AmeriCorps National Service initiative. As members, they receive the following benefits:

- An annual living allowance of \$12,100
- An education award of \$5,730 upon successful completion of service;
- Health and child care benefits;
- Student loan forbearance while enrolled in the program (Accrued interest on qualified loans is eligible for payment by the National Service Trust. Please note that not all loans are qualified for forbearance);
- Professional training opportunities and citizenship development.

### **NCAT role and responsibilities**

- Manage national recruitment, application, and enrollment of members, including member contracts, in collaboration with Host Sites
- Conduct member background checks as required by and according to CNCS standards;
- Communicate expectations and procedures pertaining to the general Energy Corps program, member performance, and Host Site responsibilities;
- Provide pre-service orientation and training for members prior to placement at host site;
- Provide host site supervisors with training and materials necessary to successfully meet program requirements;
- Pay the living allowance to members on a bi-monthly basis. Members will submit time sheets and checks will be distributed according to the schedule given to members;
- Provide general liability insurance and Worker's Compensation;
- Facilitate the payment of an education award at the completion of service;
- Provide ongoing training and support for members;
- Prepare and submit required reports to the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service;
- Monitor members service progress as it relates to the grant requirements;
- Conduct mid-year site visits and assist the member when needed;
- Determine and communicate on a case-by-case basis the procedure for replacing a member that does not complete their service term. Member's completing less than 30% of their service hours have the possibility of being replaced. If a suitable replacement cannot be found, NCAT will provide the Host Site with a pro-rated reimbursement of the member cost-share contribution.

### **Expectations of Host Sites**

Organizations, agencies, and campuses that serve as Energy Corps Host Sites are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Provide meaningful service work and member development opportunities (note that members cannot replace a staff position or serve as administrative help)
- Provide an agreed upon cost share to help support the member's living stipend;
- Sign and return Memorandum of Understanding before member begins service, formalizing their role as a Energy Corps host site;
- Pay invoice for host site cost share contribution within 30 days of receiving program Memorandum of Understanding;
  - If the Host is utilizing federal funds to pay the cost-share contribution, document the amount and source of those funds. All federal funds used for the purpose of paying cost-share contributions must be eligible to match to another federal grant. If using federal funds, Host Sites should check with the granting agency for eligibility information.
- Participate in host site orientation and maintain regular communication with Energy Corps staff;
- Participate in member recruitment and selection;
- Provide orientation, training and supervision necessary to meet the objectives outlined in the host site application (note that no more than 20% of a member's total hours can be devoted to training);
- Designate a Site Supervisor to set goals and objectives with measurable outcomes and oversee the Energy Corps member's progress toward the stated objectives;

- Provide suitable designated work space, as well as necessary equipment, supplies and travel costs to complete specified tasks;
- Verify, sign and submit member timesheets in a timely manner;
- Complete member performance evaluations and other reporting requirements;
- Release the member from the site for participation in AmeriCorps member trainings and events;
- Ensure members do not participate in AmeriCorps prohibited activities while charging time to the AmeriCorps program or at the request of program staff. Prohibited activities include lobbying, political, religious or advocacy activities;
- Assist the member and Energy Corps program staff in gathering meaningful service recipient feedback including changes in learning or behavior;
- Document in writing and communicate immediately to NCAT any member performance issues or other program concerns as outlined in the Energy Corps Supervisor Handbook;
- Follow the procedure outlined in the Supervisor Handbook to resolve any grievances documented between the Host Site and Energy Corps member and participate in the resolution of any grievances involving members.

### **Host site cost share**

Each host site is required to provide a cash match contribution to help support the living allowance for each AmeriCorps member placed at their agency/organization. The cost share for full time members is \$11,500. Upon notification of application acceptance, host sites will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to a cost share payment schedule.

### **Host site selection criteria**

NCAT will take the following items into consideration when reviewing applications:

- Member activities at host sites will address compelling community needs that are consistent with Energy Corps objectives and performance measures;
- Identification of realistic, specific and measurable member objectives that help to meet the Energy Corps performance measures;
- The depth of impact the service activities will have on both the host site and larger community as well as plans for sustaining the work of the member beyond their term of service;
- Capacity of host site to provide effective supervision, mentoring and development opportunities for the member;
- Ability of host site to comply with program requirements, such as gathering feedback from service recipients.

### **Member recruitment, selection and placement**

Once host sites are selected and the position descriptions are developed, NCAT will begin recruiting members and strives to recruit members both locally and nationally. Host sites are required to participate in the recruitment process for their own members. All potential members must complete an application (available online) and obtain two written references. When an application is submitted, candidates will be screened by NCAT. If an applicant passes the screening process, NCAT will conduct an initial interview. At that point, NCAT will pass along the top candidates to the host site for a second interview, more specific to the site activities. This second interview is initiated by the host site and arranged according to the schedules of the applicant and the host site supervisor. Final placement occurs when

both the applicant and host site agree to the match. Please note that NCAT, not the host site, will contact and make all final offers to selected applicants. NCAT will work with host sites to fill all requests, however, **acceptance of host site proposals does not guarantee placement of a member**. Openings will be filled as appropriate matches are made, until all slots are filled.

### NCAT Energy Corps 2015-2016 Program Start-Up Timeline

<b>June 1, 2015</b>	Host Site Applications due to NCAT by 5pm MDT, <b>early applications are encouraged</b>
<b>June 1-July 7, 2015</b>	<b>Member recruitment period (positions will be posted and open as soon as host site applications are approved and position descriptions agreed upon by both parties)</b>
<b>July 7-August 7, 2015</b>	NCAT member screening and first round of interviews
<b>August 10, 2015</b>	Top applicants are sent to host sites for second interview
<b>August 17, 2015</b>	Selections made and positions offered to top candidate
<b>TBD</b>	Host Site Supervisor Orientation
<b>September 16-18, 2015</b>	Member orientation and training in Butte, MT
<b>September 21, 2015</b>	Members begin service at host sites

\*please note that the dates above may be subject to change

Thank you for your interest in NCAT's Energy Corps AmeriCorps program. Please complete the attached Host Site Application and return it by **5pm MST on June 1, 2015 via mail, email, or fax**. If you have any questions about the application process or the Energy Corps program, contact Kaleena Miller at 406-533-6651 or [kaleenam@ncat.org](mailto:kaleenam@ncat.org).

#### Submit completed applications via email, mail or fax to:

National Center for Appropriate Technology  
 Attn: Kaleena Miller  
 3040 Continental Drive  
 Butte, MT 59701  
 406-533-6651  
 406-494-2905 (fax)  
[kaleenam@ncat.org](mailto:kaleenam@ncat.org)

**NCAT ENERGY CORPS AMERICORPS PROGRAM  
2015-2016  
Host Site Application**

**Organization Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**Website:**

**Contact Person:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**Name of AmeriCorps member's direct supervisor:**

**Title:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Number of member(s) requested:**

If you have a particular individual in mind who might be interested in serving at your site, please provide contact information below:

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Narrative:**

1. Describe your organization's and community's unmet needs and opportunities that the member's service activities will address.
2. Describe the service activities in which the AmeriCorps member will engage. Please be specific.
3. Describe expected accomplishments, results and how the host site and member will gather results-based feedback from service recipients.
4. Indicate how you plan to sustain these activities after the AmeriCorps program year has ended.
5. List any specific skills or qualifications this position might require.
6. Indicate the number of individuals an Energy Corps member or members will be able to reach within the definition of accepted performance measures discussed above, that otherwise would not have received assistance, through your host site activities. Refer to performance measures on page two.

**Number of entities** receiving hands-on energy assistance (may include weatherization and conservation activities; energy assessments, audits and consultations; and alternative and renewable energy activities) that meet the definition of accepted performance measures discussed above:

**Number of individuals** receiving education or training on energy and environmentally sustainable topics within the definition of accepted performance measures discussed above:

7. List opportunities for member development and training.
8. Members that will have "recurring access to vulnerable populations" during their service terms must pass an FBI fingerprint check in order to serve in the program.
  - **Definition of vulnerable populations:** children, elderly, people with disabilities
  - **Definition of recurring access:** access on more than one occasion or access that is not for a 1 day period or episodic in nature

Will member have recurring access to vulnerable populations during the course of their service term?

**9. For continuation host sites only.**

- Identify successes and challenges with previous Energy Corps projects and how a new member would continue and expand the initiatives of the previous member.
- Indicate any prospective changes in program supervision or staffing.

*Please check below* to indicate your ability to meet the following requirements:

- Cost Share:** \$11,500 cash match per full-time member
- Recruitment:** Participate in member recruitment efforts
- Work space:** Provide suitable work space and necessary equipment for member
- Supervision:** Provide on-site supervision, ensuring member activities adhere to program requirements and the member's position description
- Reporting:** Submit progress reports and evaluations to NCAT as agreed upon in the MOU

I have reviewed the NCAT Energy Corps AmeriCorps 2015-2016 Host Site Application information and submit this application on behalf of the above named agency.

Name:

Title:

Date: