

# Certification Criteria

**Service Year Alliance** defines a service year as a paid opportunity to develop real-world workplace skills and civic engagement through hands-on service. All positions featured on [ServiceYear.org](https://www.ServiceYear.org), Service Year Alliance's online platform, must be submitted and approved for certification\* prior to becoming public. Below is an overview of the certification criteria used to help determine the eligibility of submitted positions. For more information on joining or to send a question, please visit [ServiceYear.org](https://www.ServiceYear.org).

## Position's scope and term:

- Addresses unmet community needs and specifies intended outcomes.
- Engages one or more corps members in direct service or indirect "capacity building" for direct service programs at least 32 hours per week over the course of 9-24 months total.
  - Exceptions: Service length can be reduced to 20-31 service hours per week and/or 6-8 months for programs that either (1) consist of multiple significant components, one of which is the corps member's direct service, or (2) recruit from very specific populations, including but not limited to, veterans reintegrating into civilian life or students pursuing service and degree attainment simultaneously. As an example, an 8 month position that engages college students in at least 20 service hours per week while they also attend class would meet this requirement.

## Corps member support, training and development:

- Provide a monthly living allowance of \$1,050 to \$2,100
  - The living allowance can be reduced in instances where benefits such as housing, meals, and/or waived tuition are offered. The stipend may also be waived at the discretion of the service year corps member.
  - Additionally, the living allowance can be increased for professional positions (i.e. positions requiring higher level skills or certifications) in instances where corps members are serving in a professional capacity for less than market salary, or are being placed in underserved communities.
  - Please note: If the host organization determines that a higher living allowance is necessary for legal or other reasons, that is acceptable if an appropriate justification is provided.
- Have an orientation that includes a review of corps member contracts, agreements and benefits; a swearing-in ceremony; training on national service; and skill-specific training.
- Provide ongoing training, supervision, and mentoring to corps members to build their skills and opportunities, increase their ability to provide quality service, and ensure they benefit from their service experience.
- Identify specific skills, certifications, and other learning outcomes that corps members will attain through the program.
- Provide support to corps members as they transition out of the program into higher education, work, or further service. Plans should be developed early in the program year with appropriate supports provided throughout the term of service.

## Recruitment and civic ties:

- Maximizing, to the extent practicable, diversity across geography, race, ethnicity and income or building leadership from within communities
- Strengthen civic ties by connecting members to other service year corps members. This includes:
  - Agreeing to arrange for corps members to be sworn in and graduate as a class belonging to the civilian service year corps across the United States
  - Enabling corps members to receive the President's Civilian Service Award for Outstanding Service to the Nation or other recognition upon completion of their term of service
  - Encouraging corps members to serve alongside other service year corps members during service projects on National Days of Service

## Safety:

- Take measures to ensure the safety and security of corps members and those they serve.

## Additional considerations and prohibited service activities:

- Corps members cannot be used to displace existing workers
- While on service hours, corps members cannot:
  - Assist, promote, or deter union organizing, or impair existing contracts for service or collective bargaining agreements
  - Engage in any form of religious proselytization (defined as inducing someone to convert to one's faith)
  - Participate in, or endorse, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, or elected officials
  - Organize or engage in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- The focus of a corps member's service should not be:
  - Administrative in nature
  - Influencing legislation
  - Intended to provide a direct benefit to a business organized for profit (although incidental benefits arising from activities organized for the benefit of the community are permissible)
  - Intended to benefit a labor union, a partisan political organization, or a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 relating to engaging in political activities or a substantial amount of lobbying
  - Engaging in religious instruction or conducting worship services

*\*The certification criteria are applied to domestic service year opportunities unaffiliated with AmeriCorps. All AmeriCorps opportunities are eligible for certification when added through the appropriate grantee's account. Service Year Alliance looks forward to including international service year opportunities in the future, but is not certifying international positions at this time.*