



www.pcei.org

# Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute



August 18, 2012

Dear Applicant,

Congratulations! You've been selected for a position through the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute's (PCEI) AmeriCorps Program.

Since this is an AmeriCorps position, it is important for you to understand the commitment you will be asked to make to PCEI AmeriCorps. I would like to schedule and confirm the date and time of your phone interview with me to finalize your position placement and provide you with some important information about our program.

I have your phone interview scheduled for **August 22nd, 2012 at 4:00pm**. Please reply to this email with confirmation this works for you. **If you are unable to make this interview, please contact me as soon as possible.** (Joan work: 208-882-1444 and cell: 208-596-1837)

During your interview I will be asking you the same questions that we ask all applicants. I will take notes in order to keep an accurate record. During the phone interview you may experience some pauses during this time. The interview should take 20 -30 minutes.

Be prepared to answers questions for the position you applied for and the AmeriCorps information provided below.

Please take some time to read through this email and make sure you are familiar with the information provided. Be sure to keep track of any questions that you may have, as there will be time at the end of the interview for you to ask them.

We will be mailing you a packet of forms that you will need to fill out and return to us by August 29<sup>th</sup>. The forms are required before the start date of your service, which is September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your interest in AmeriCorps Program with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI). I look forward to speaking with you soon.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Alexander  
Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute  
AmeriCorps Placement Coordinator  
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<<http://www.pcei.org/pcc>>  
work 208-882-1444  
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# Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute



The Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI) is a 26-year-old environmental non-profit based in Moscow, ID. Our mission is to increase citizen involvement in decisions that affect our region's environment.

Through community organizing and education, PCEI assists members of our communities in making environmentally sound and economically viable decisions that promote a sustainable future.

We provide members with opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to serve effectively, and we promote an ethic of social and environmental responsibility. As AmeriCorps members you can increase your leadership skills and your commitment to civic involvement by participating in a variety of trainings and other learning activities.

## **Benefits**

| <b>Service Term</b>             | <b>Stipend</b>  | <b>Education Award</b> | <b>Personal/Sick Leave</b>   | <b>Term Dates</b>                                     |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>1700 hours<br/>11-months</b> | <b>\$12,100*<br/>(distributed evenly throughout term)</b> | <b>\$5,550**</b>       | <b>64 hours<br/>(8 days)</b> | <b>September 4, 2012<br/>thru<br/>August 31, 2013</b> |

\* The living stipend is subject to federal and any applicable state tax. Members that do not serve the full term dates will not receive the full stipend.

\*\* The Education Award is subject to federal taxes during the year(s) that it is used. Members must complete their term of service to receive the full education award.



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## Education Award

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is a benefit AmeriCorps members receive upon successful completion of their term of service. The award can be used to go to specific [schools](#) or repay qualifying [student loans](#). There are [general terms](#) that guide the use of the award and a [process](#) to follow to access your funds. The award is subject to income [taxes](#).

The [Ed Award Guidebook](#) is a comprehensive resource that provides in depth information on the Education Award and its application – we encourage you to review it.

## Forbearance

While serving, AmeriCorps members can place their awards in [forbearance](#). This means they won't make payments while serving and the interest that gathers on their qualified loans will get paid once they successfully complete their term(s) of service. **It is important that you check with your loan provider to make sure your loan applies.**

## Medical Insurance

All members are eligible for basic medical insurance (through [The Corps Network](#)) as long as they do not have current coverage by another provider. This insurance covers only members (not dependents) and does not include vision or dental. There is a \$100 deductible that covers both insurance and prescriptions.

## Childcare Allowance

There is a childcare allowance that is provided to members who need it and who qualify. To be eligible you must: be a full-time member performing 1700 hours of service, be the parent or full time guardian of a child who is under 13 years of age who resides with the member, and meet the family income guidelines. Please let us know if you would like to take advantage of this benefit.

## Core Values

### Diversity

PCEI, its sponsors, staff and members, is made up of individuals with varying backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, values, communication styles and goals. Professional differences of opinion and thought will occur. We are committed to creating a safe place in which to share our differences and dialogue in a climate of openness, mutual respect, trust and professionalism.

### Stewardship

PCEI is founded on the principles of stewardship to the environment and the community through civic engagement. We focus on increasing environmental and community



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awareness through restoring watersheds, educating the community about environmental topics, conserving resources and engaging volunteers in service. Each member will bring a different level of community service experience and environmental awareness to our program. We expect that our members will be dedicated to the service they provide and actively support the core values of PCEI.

## **Challenge**

Our program is designed to promote individual growth through challenge and opportunity. We seek individuals that are open to learning throughout the year. We recognize this will be different for each individual - serving outside in the cold rain may be more of a challenge to one person, while participating in a two-hour meeting may be a challenge for another.

Whatever your level of experience, we ask that you come to this program expecting and seeking the opportunity to grow and learn.

## **Communication**

The service we do is a complex network of logistical and interpersonal considerations. Effective service requires thorough communication, such as participation in monthly team meetings and occasional community forums. We expect members who choose to join PCEI to be dedicated not only to their service, but also to increasing their ability to communicate effectively with members, staff, sponsors and community stakeholders. We do this with the following goals in mind:

- To build stronger communication at all levels.
- To improve programmatically to meet the changing needs of the region.
- To resolve issues and explore solutions.
- To share the challenges and celebrations of the service we do.
- To promote professionalism.
- To share logistics and information.

## **Expectations**

### **Commitment**

Joining PCEI is not just a commitment to a 10 or 11-month term of service with a specific organization; it is a commitment to join a local and national service movement dedicated to making a difference in the community. Our members are expected to support the goals of AmeriCorps, PCEI and its sponsors by upholding its values and policies.

### **Housing and Transportation**

All members are responsible for their own housing. Please take this into consideration when choosing a placement and making living arrangements.



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Members are responsible for their own transportation to and from their service site. Some placements require that the member have their own vehicle to drive while on service time. Applicants who are interested in serving in a placement that requires them to have a car should have appropriate insurance coverage and a vehicle in good working order. PCEI AmeriCorps sponsors are required to reimburse members for any mileage incurred while on service time in a personal vehicle.

## Flexibility

In general, members will serve a 40-hour week (5 days a week, 8-hour days) for 10 or 11 months, completing a minimum of 1700 hours of service and development. This can include weekend and evening hours. While PCEI strives to notify members ahead of time regarding schedule changes, we also recommend that members approach their service term with flexibility and communicate their needs and schedules to the appropriate people.

## Member Training and Skill Development

We strive to provide members with both training and experience that positions them for pursuing careers and education in fields that better society.

PCEI members participate in direct service at least 80% of their required 1700 hours. The other 20% will be spent on professional and personal development, learning opportunities, and the Change Agent Project (CAP). Members will also participate in a variety of training and skill development activities that are designed to build skills for the year and to stimulate continued leadership and career development. Some of these activities are required parts of the program and some are optional.

- **Required Training:** PCEI members are expected to participate in Member Orientations, National Service Days, monthly team meetings and trainings. Your **orientation is Wednesday, September 12th on the University of Idaho campus from 12:30-5:00pm.** These are mandatory events.
- **Idaho at Play Service Event:** Each member is also required to work with a group of other members to develop a project, additional to their service at their site that builds their leadership skills and positively affects the community. The members develop and lead their own project, with assistance from community members.
- **Optional Trainings and Events:** PCEI and our State AmeriCorps office offer a variety of optional trainings. PCEI also provides resources, assistance, and connections for members who seek to develop specific skills.

## Paperwork

As a federally funded program, our members are required to document their service and turn in necessary paperwork. Members will fill out monthly timesheets, reports, evaluations, etc. Our expectation is that all paperwork will be filled out correctly and turned in on time. Most of the training can be done online and will be addressed at our



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**orientation, which will be held on Wednesday, September 12 and is required for all members.**

## **Uniforms**

Our expectation is that members will be identified as an AmeriCorps member while serving on AmeriCorps time. We also expect all members to use their own discretion as to which type of uniform is appropriate for the service situation and site. All members will be issued an AmeriCorps identifying top (t-shirt or sweatshirt) and additional identifiers such as pins, stickers, buttons and a nametag.

## **Background Checks**

Prior to being accepted into the program, the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute will conduct a check to determine if applicant is registered in the National Sex Offender Public Registry. Once offered a position, such offer will be conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory report from the State of Idaho, the member's home state, and FBI criminal identification systems. You are required to obtain a set of fingerprints for an FBI background check. This can be done at your local police department, or at the Department of Motor Vehicles. You will be reimbursed for the cost, so please provide us with your receipts. These will be due on the 29<sup>th</sup> along with other completed forms which you will receive in the mail shortly.

**Understand that misinformation or omission of information from your application could result in disqualification and/or termination as an AmeriCorps member.**

## **Evaluation**

We strongly believe in continuous improvement within all aspects of our program. Our continuous improvement process relies heavily on feedback from our members. As a result, members are expected to provide feedback on most aspects of our program. In addition, each member participates in two performance evaluations during their term of service. The evaluations are designed to provide constructive feedback to the member

regarding his/her performance. Members are responsible for collecting the information necessary to report on their project accomplishments.

## **Prior Service Experience**

Many of our members have served before in other AmeriCorps programs. Whereas AmeriCorps has the same guidelines nationwide, each program can be very different. It is important to approach each term of AmeriCorps with an open mind.

AmeriCorps members can enroll in multiple terms of service that add up to the value of two full-time education awards. In other words, you can blend summer, part-time, and full-time service positions and receive awards as long as the combined service terms don't exceed





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two full terms. (You can also serve without receiving an Education Award up to a maximum number of terms outlined below.)

In blending summer, part-time, and full-time terms, you can serve a maximum:

- 4 terms with AmeriCorps state and national
- 2 terms with VISTA (you can do a third term with VISTA and elect not to receive an Education Award. See our [VISTA](#) resource for more information.)
- 2 terms with NCCC

If you max out the number of terms you serve with one stream of service, you can start a new term with another and receive additional awards -- as long as you have not yet reached the full value of two full-time awards. You can also serve terms (and elect not to receive an award) up to the limits shown above.

It is the applicant's responsibility to indicate on their application whether they have had previous terms of AmeriCorps. Understand that misinformation or omission of information could result in disqualification and/or termination as an AmeriCorps member.

## **Calendars**

All members will receive a PCEI calendar at the beginning of their term that will include trainings, events, holidays and breaks.

## **Change**

We expect to experience some changes between now and when your program begins. Even though we plan to communicate those changes to our members as soon as possible, it is likely that some changes would not be announced until the first day of orientation.

## **Important Note**

Please keep in mind that PCEI is a federally funded program. All of our partnerships and AmeriCorps placements are contingent upon receipt of this funding on an annual basis.



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## **AmeriCorps Members**

AmeriCorps members serve on projects with schools, community-based organizations and government agencies. During their term of service, members become an integral part of the sponsoring organization and the community they serve. Members not only need to be committed to the service site within which they are placed, but will also need a high level of commitment to the mission of PCEI.

There will be 10 AmeriCorps members serving in the region through our program this year. The members will meet monthly to provide one another with support, networking opportunities, skill building and a connection to the community.

Additionally, members will be away from their service sites to participate in required AmeriCorps Member Orientations, a mandatory statewide Serve Idaho Conference in Boise in February, National Service Days, and to complete the Idaho at Play Event. At team meetings, members will be required to turn in timesheets and any additional paperwork.

## **Schedule**

Members are expected to serve a 20- to 40-hour week. This includes both service and professional development hours. For the most part this will be 8-hour days; 5 days a week, but may sometimes require hours on weekends and evenings. The program is set up so members spend 80% of their hours at their service placement and 20% of their service year pursuing professional development. Members are expected to communicate their activities to their sponsors and set up a calendar that balances the needs of their placement, the member's development and those of PCEI AmeriCorps.

It is the responsibility of the AmeriCorps member and the sponsoring agency to collaborate on a year-long plan to be sure all 1700 hours are completed and recorded.

We look forward to speaking with you for your phone interview next week. Please be on the look out for a packet of paperwork that should arrive early next week. These forms will need to be returned to our office by August 29<sup>th</sup> at the latest, as well as your fingerprint information. Also, don't forget our mandatory orientation will be on Wednesday, September 12, at the University of Idaho, beginning at 12:30. More information will be coming your way soon.