Prospective Member Guide

2022 – 2023

AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program
Serve to Empower

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AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program Website
https://www.nhcadsv.org/avap.html
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AVAP 101

Overview of the Program
Established in 1994, the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP) was designed to address gaps in services for victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the state of New Hampshire. AVAP members provide a wide range of free and confidential services including:

- Financial literacy lessons and workshops
- Legal assistance (e.g. help obtain a restraining order and providing support at hearings)
- Answer crisis hotline calls
- Make referrals to other resource providers
- Facilitate support groups
- Assist victims with impact statements
- Ensure survivors are being treated with dignity

AVAP focuses on the AmeriCorps interest area of Economic Opportunity. One of the reasons for this focus is Financial Abuse occurs in 99% of Domestic Violence cases (Adams et al., 2008, 563) and is a primary reason victims find themselves unable to leave their abusers.

As an AVAP member, you will be part of the AmeriCorps State and National program, a federal National service program that includes a modest stipend and benefits.

AmeriCorps at a Glance
AmeriCorps State and National was founded as part of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and first became operational in 1994.

AmeriCorps State and National (AmeriCorps) is a national service program aiming to bring people together to tackle the country’s most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.

AmeriCorps members engage in direct service activities to meet community needs. AVAP is one of only two AmeriCorps programs focusing specifically on intimate partner violence.

As an AmeriCorps State and National Program, AVAP offers many benefits, including:

- A weekly living stipend
- Health Insurance (if full time)
- Training and professional development
- Education Award (to be put towards qualifying student loan debt or future education expenses) upon successful completion of service
- Receive preferential hiring by over 600 Employers of National Service upon successful completion of your service.
AVAP Service Description

Summary of Service Responsibilities

AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP) members provide crisis intervention, direct support services, and advocacy to individuals and families who have been impacted by domestic, sexual, and stalking violence, addressing critical needs of communities throughout New Hampshire. Members receive training from experts in the field on crucial topics related to victim/survivor advocacy. As financial abuse presents a significant barrier to survivors in accessing safety, members integrate economic empowerment into their advocacy by providing financial literacy education and services. AVAP members are responsible for working to meet the needs of victims in conjunction with their agency policies and procedures. Members are also responsible for meeting AVAP and AmeriCorps requirements.

Reports To

Day to day supervision for the projects to which the member is assigned is provided by agency Site Supervisor. Member reports to NHCADSV Program Director and AVAP Program Manager for program activities and responsibilities.

Hours

Full-time members average 37.5 hours/week for 52 weeks. Members must achieve a minimum of 1700 hours during this 52-week period. Members may take up to 140 hours of time away from service responsibilities for sickness and personal time with prior approval of supervisor. Specific schedule of service hours are established by Site Supervisor. Member may not serve more than 24 hours/month for on-call after service hours.

Half-time members must achieve a minimum of 900 hours during the program year. Members may take up to 75 hours of time away from service responsibilities for sickness and personal time with prior approval of supervisor. Specific schedule of service hours are established by Site Supervisor. Member may not serve more than 12 hours/month for on-call after service hours.

Essential Functions

Physical labor is of low demand: stands, sits, and walks most of the time on duty. Should have ability to transport clients and travel to required meetings and events. A valid driver's license and personal insurance on car is required for most placements.

Member will be required to communicate with staff and court personnel, conduct assessments with victims, and interact with other service providers. Must be able to communicate effectively in written and oral format and maintain appropriate confidentiality and boundary requirements. Good organizational skills required and must be able to deal effectively with stressful or emotionally difficult situations in regards to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Qualifications

Must have willingness to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in an unbiased manner and as described in member agreement and other related documents, ability to follow all rules of strict confidentiality and safety, good interpersonal skills, a minimum of high school diploma or GED, and be at least 18 years of age.
AVAP Position Description

By serving a year with AVAP, you have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of victims and survivors of domestic, sexual, trafficking, and stalking violence. The experience and training you receive will not only help you make a difference in the field of victim/survivor services but will also allow you to make valuable connections within the profession, community, and with other socially conscious individuals.

AVAP members serve as Crisis Center or Criminal Justice advocates, providing a variety of direct services to meet the needs of survivors and their families which include:

**Crisis Center Advocate**

- Provide financial literacy sessions (one-and-one & workshops) and referrals to services that will assist those seeking to address financial barriers and gain financial independence.
- Assist survivors in obtaining restraining orders and offering support and assistance at legal hearings.
- Provide confidential support to survivors of domestic, sexual, trafficking, and stalking violence.
- Answer crisis hot line calls.
- Provide accompaniment to the hospital, police department, criminal proceedings, and social service agencies.
- Make contacts and/or referrals to social service agencies and other community resources.
- Participate in public outreach and education to community organizations, hospitals, etc.
- Facilitate support groups and workshops for survivors.

**Criminal Justice Advocate**

- Refer victims to local crisis centers and social service & community agencies.
- Educate the victim/witness about the criminal justice system.
- Provide information on victim’s compensation and assist survivors in the application process.
- Provide information on financial literacy and referrals to meet financial literacy needs.
- Inform the victim/witness of case status, procedure, and hearing/trial dates.
- Support and assist victims in preparing victim impact statements.
- Provide information and referrals for financial assistance.
- Collaborating with community partners to offer financial literacy sessions and workshops in the community.

**Economic Empowerment**

As members of a program within AmeriCorps’ focus area of Economic Opportunity, AVAP members are trained and supported throughout their service year on financial literacy and economic empowerment services available to survivors. Members become a knowledgeable support at their host sites on the important work of reducing the impact of financial abuse on survivors. Each AVAP member contributes to the cohort’s accomplishment of the following performance measures:

- Provide financial literacy services to 950 economically disadvantaged individuals.
- Improve the financial knowledge of 350 economically disadvantaged individuals.
- Leverage an additional 100 volunteers that will be engaged in community awareness projects which will be inclusive of the impact of financial abuse on survivors.
Where can I serve?

AVAP Members serve at the following locations:

- Claremont
- Concord
- Conway
- Durham
- Epping
- Keene
- Laconia
- Lebanon
- Nashua
- Manchester
- Milford
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth
- Rochester
Benefits of Service

Living Allowance
AmeriCorps service is considered volunteer service instead of employment. The 2022-2023 full-time AVAP living allowance is $16,100 for the full 52 weeks. Half-time members will receive $8,150 for the full 52 weeks. Members are paid bi-weekly by the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and will only be paid for the weeks they are enrolled in the AVAP program. Payroll deductions and Federal taxes are automatically deducted from the check (New Hampshire does not have a State Income Tax).

Members can work a second job during their service to supplement their income. Moreover, they are sometimes employed part-time at their host site.

Education Award
Upon successful completion of service, AVAP member will receive an education award to be put towards qualifying student loans or towards future education. Members who are 55 or older at the start of their term of service can transfer their education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child.

The Education Award is $6,345 for full-time service (1700 hours), and $3,172.50 for half-time service (900 hours). Pro-rated benefits may be paid if a member is released for compelling personal circumstances after serving at least 15 percent of a term of service. The award must be used within seven years of the member’s completion of service. Members are limited to 2 Education Awards.

The Education Award counts as taxable income the year that is used and taxes are not automatically deducted when payments are applied. Education Awards are paid directly to the institution designated by the member. Payments can be spread out as the member chooses.

Some schools match the education award in part or in full! A complete list of these institutions is available at https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award/matching-institutions.

In-Service Training, Education, and Professional Development
AVAP Members receive 13 full days of training at the start of their service to prepare them for their assignments. This will include an introduction to partner agencies, education on subjects related to intimate partner violence, and instruction on performance measures. They also attend monthly meetings which include training and professional development components. Some topics covered in these sessions include:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Support Group Facilitation
- Social Justice Issues in DV/SA
- Financial Empowerment and Abuse
- Self-Care
- Child Trauma and Sexual Abuse
- Ready Corps Training (Disaster Response Training)
- 9/11 and Martin Luther King Jr. Days of service
- Governor’s Conference on Volunteerism
- AmeriCorps Week
**Healthcare**  
Full-time AmeriCorps members who are not insured are eligible for healthcare coverage. For more information, please visit [https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/current-members/health-care-options](https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/current-members/health-care-options)

**Child Care**  
Full-Time AmeriCorps Members are also eligible for child care benefits. Members must select a qualified child care provider. Additional information is available from the AVAP Manager.

**Employers of National Service**  
Your service with AmeriCorps also gives you preferential treatment from employers of over 600 companies across all sectors of the economy. Examples include: Timberland, Teach for America, and state and local governments. A complete list of Employers of National Service is available at [https://www.nationalservice.gov/partnerships/employers-national-service/search-network](https://www.nationalservice.gov/partnerships/employers-national-service/search-network).
Living in New Hampshire as an AmeriCorps Member

New Hampshire is ranked the 8th best state to live in using the UN’s Human Development Index (Stebbins & Sauter, 2019). Despite being a small state, New Hampshire has something for everyone! Even on an AmeriCorps budget, you’re never too far from the mountains or the beach. Each season brings new and exciting things to do.

**Housing**

Vacancy rates in New Hampshire are less than 1% (Christon, 3, 2019), presenting challenges to moving here. We do have resources available to make housing easier for you. One of the resources available to you is an AmeriCorps roommate finder Facebook Page that is shared with all the AmeriCorps programs in the state.

For members serving in the Manchester area, The Service Dorm offers 12 single-occupancy rooms available for rent to AmeriCorps members.

Some of the best sites to search for units to rent include:

- [https://nh.craigslist.org/](https://nh.craigslist.org/)
- [https://www.zillow.com/nh/rentals/](https://www.zillow.com/nh/rentals/)
- [https://www.apartments.com/nh/](https://www.apartments.com/nh/)

Rent is higher in New Hampshire than a lot of other states and because of the low vacancy rate and the high property taxes. On top of using the above websites to search for available units, you may also find it helpful to create an ad on craigslist for a room wanted. Be sure to include your age, why you are moving to New Hampshire, and basic information about what your expectations are and a little bit about yourself. You can find an example post on the next page.
AmeriCorps Victim Advocate looking for housing

I’m a 25-year-old who will start serving at a nonprofit in Concord as an AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP) Member at the beginning of September. I’m looking to rent close to Concord from September 2022 through the end of September 2023. I am looking to spend no more than $600 per month on rent and utilities.

I keep all common areas clean but can be messy in my own personal space. I don’t drink, smoke, or use any drugs (except caffeine). My spare time consists of reading, listening to music, singing, and learning guitar. I’m always happy to help around the house/apartment with chores. I have no preference for roommates and am comfortable rooming with POC and LGBTQIA individuals.

Let me know if I sound like a good fit for you!

Your Name

Getting by and Having Fun on the Living Allowance

The living allowance is not by any means a living wage, but there are ways to make the most of your money and even find fund activities that fit your budget. Here are a few tips to managing your finances as an AVAP Member.

Outside Employment

As an AVAP Member, you may hold a second job as long as it doesn’t interfere with the requirements and expectations of your service. Your host site may offer per diem opportunities as well to supplement your income.

Spending Plans

Tracking your spending will be key during this time, but it doesn’t have to be as difficult as sitting down and sorting all your receipts and bills. Microsoft Excel offers a few different personal budgeting templates. There are also many free apps that help you track your spending. Intuit, the company behind Turbo Tax and QuickBooks, has a free app, Mint, which automatically tracks and categorizes your spending for you. There are many other budgeting apps at your disposal as well!

Apply for SNAP (Formerly known as Food Stamps)

As an AmeriCorps Member, you are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Moreover, your AmeriCorps Living Allowance will not count towards your Income for federal or federally-assisted benefit programs based on need (Trinity, 1, 2007).
Take Advantage of Free/Low-Cost Activities
Some events will include provided meals and free swag. There are also plenty of free or low-cost activities to do in New Hampshire.

Red River Theater – Red River Theater in Concord allows free admission to AmeriCorps Members with proof of their active service.

Drive the Kancamagus – Highly recommended during the Fall for a good foliage tour, the Kancamagus Byway gives a great scenic tour of the White Mountains and provides access to many trails. Call it the Kanc if you want the locals to think you’re from around the area.

The Currier Museum of Art – Located in Manchester, the Currier houses a permanent collection that includes works by Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Georgia O’Keefe, and many more. The museum is free to New Hampshire residents who arrive before noon on the second Saturday of every month. Be sure to bring proof of residency!

The Millyard Museum – The Millyard museum provides a historical overview of the settlement on the Merrimack River from Native Americans to the modern time, focusing primarily on the development of the Amoskeag Millyard. The museum is $8 for adults, $4 for children 12-17, and free for anyone under 12.

Other Recreation
New Hampshire has outdoor activities for everyone. You can hike in the White Mountains or ascend Mt. Washington where the record for highest recorded wind speed on Earth stood from 1932 to 1996 at 231 MPH! You can also visit the seacoast and enjoy some of the beaches. If you’re more of a lake person, there are plenty of lakes to enjoy as well! There are plenty of craft breweries and farmers’ markets to visit as well!

In the winter, you can enjoy snowboarding or skiing, as well as take up snowshoeing. As winter starts to fade, the sugar shacks will be active making fresh maple syrup!
Easy Access
New Hampshire is also well located in New England to give you easy access to Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. Each state also has a handful of fun activities that are accessible for your budget.

**Boston** – The largest city and center of activity in New England, Boston offers something for everyone. You can follow the freedom trail and see famous historical sites from the American Revolution, Abolitionist Movement, and Women’s Rights Movements. Spend some time in Faneuil Hall and watch the street performers, or, if you are willing to spend money, there are no shortages of museums including the Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Science, and the New England Aquarium.

**The Bridge of Flowers** – The often forgotten Western Massachusetts holds some of New England’s best treasures. The Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne, MA is covered in flowers during every bulb and bloom season in New England. The spectacular view is free to the public.

**Ben & Jerry’s Factory** – The Ben & Jerry’s factory is tucked away in Waterbury, VT. A tour costs only $4, lasts 30 minutes, and ends with a sample of the current batch of ice cream. You can also visit the flavor graveyard of flavors that have left us and learn about how the company incorporate social justice into its daily operations.

**The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame** – Springfield Massachusetts gets credit for some sources as being the home of basketball and therefore the home of the Basketball Hall of Fame. It’s a must visit for fans of the sport!
How do I apply?
The application is available at nhcadsv.org/avap.html. For your application to be considered, you must submit:

1. A completed and signed application
2. Resume
3. Personal Statement
4. Copy of Current Driver’s License
5. Contact information for 3 professional references (not family or friends)

All of the above should be submitted by email to Emily@nhcadsv.org or by mail:

AmeriCorps Victims Assistance Program
PO Box 353
Concord, NH 03302-0353

Any applications submitted with missing components from the above list will not be considered.

Timeline
Applications can be submitted January through July, but applications will be considered on a rolling basis. The AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program for the 2022-2023 service year will begin with the first day of training the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence on September 7, 2022. Members will begin on-site training and service on September 26, 2022. The service term runs through September 3, 2023.
2022-2023 Member Application

Application Instructions
Please return this application, accompanied by a resume, personal statement, copy of driver’s license, and the contact information for three professional references to the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program, PO Box 353, Concord, NH 03302-0353 or e-mail to emily@nhcadsv.org

This application asks you to describe skills and experiences you would offer to the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program, as well as the reasons you would like to be selected. Please consider each section carefully and highlight your role in service and volunteer activities, membership in community organizations, academic experiences, and personal skills. The selection process for the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program is extensive and competitive. We seek highly committed, motivated, and diverse AmeriCorps members.

All positions with the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program are contingent upon the availability and receipt of federal funding from The Corporation for National and Community Service.

All statements contained in this application become the property of the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program and part of the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program Member file.

This application is also available for download at https://www.nhcadsv.org/avap.html

I. Applicant Profile

1. Name (First, MI, Last) ____________________________________________________
   Are you 18 years or older? Y____    N____

2. Are you a US Citizen, National, or Lawful Permanent Resident Alien?   ______________________  ______________
   If you received your lawful permanent resident alien card after January 1987, please indicate the registration number and the card's expiration date:
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

3. Current Address: (All information will be sent to this address unless you notify us of a change)
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   Current Telephone:  (Cell) ___________________  (Home) ___________________
   Current E-mail Address: ________________________________________________________________

4. Permanent Address: (Please provide an address where you can always be reached, if different from current address)
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
5. **Education**
   All AmeriCorps members must have or be currently working towards their high school equivalency. I state that I:
   - [ ] Have obtained a high school diploma
   - [ ] Have obtained a GED
   - [ ] Did not complete high school*
   *I am currently working towards my high school diploma or GED with an expected completion date of: ______________________________

   **Educational Background**
   Please check all that apply:
   - [ ] Some college
   - [ ] Some Graduate study
   - [ ] Associates' degree
   - [ ] Graduate Degree
   - [ ] Bachelor’s degree
   - [ ] Other: ________

6. **Availability**
   I am looking to serve:
   - [ ] Full-time 1700 Hours (37 ½ hours per week)
   - [ ] Half-time 900 Hours (~ 20 hours per week)
   - [ ] Open to either of the above

7. **Transportation**
   - [ ] Valid Driver’s License Yes No
   - [ ] Reliable Transportation Yes No
   - [ ] Automobile Insurance Yes No
   If no, please explain
   (There are a few sites that do not require the member to have their own transportation)

II. **Legal Information**

   Existence of a criminal conviction/adjudication **may not** disqualify you from consideration. However, misrepresentation of that record - lying or not telling the whole truth - will disqualify you. Please answer the following questions fully.

   1. Have you ever been found true or convicted of a criminal offense which has not been annulled *(definition: to do away with)*?
   ___ Yes ___ No

   2. Are you now on probation or parole?
   ___ Yes ___ No

   If so, please attach on a separate page the name, address and telephone number of the court, probation officer, or parole officer that can be contacted to verify the above information.
III. General Information

Please indicate how you learned about the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP). Please check all that apply and then specify the exact source (ex: twitter, facebook)

- Social Media
- Friend/Relative
- Career & Internship Fair
- Guidance/Career Counselor
- Current/Former AmeriCorps Member
- AmeriCorps website
- AVAP website
- Other

IV. Optional Information:

Are you able to speak a foreign language? What language?

Are you able to read and/or write in a foreign language?

V. Personal Statement

On a separate page please include a personal statement for joining AmeriCorps, addressing the following questions:

- Why do you want to join AmeriCorps and, more specifically, be a member of the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP)?

- What skills do you possess that make you an exceptional candidate for a position with AVAP?

- What experiences and community service have you participated in to help shape who you are today?

VI. References

On a separate page, please list the contact information for three professional references* (professors, supervisors, guidance counselors, etc.) who can speak to your character, experience and ability and include the following information about each of them:

- name
- address
- telephone number
- email address
- each individual's relation to you
- the length of time that she/he has known you

*These references should not be family members or friends.
VII. Certification

To accommodate for the remote nature that COVID-19 has presented, electronic signatures will be accepted as a form of authorized certification. We will continue to accept signatures in ink should this be more accessible. Please read the statement below carefully before signing. Unsigned applications will not be considered for admission.

I certify, to the best of my knowledge, that all of the statements made in this application are true, correct, and complete and are made in good faith. I understand that misinformation or omission of information could result in disqualification and/or release as an AmeriCorps member, regardless of the time of discovery by AVAP. I also understand that the information provided herein will be used to process my application for acceptance into the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program and may be shared with host sites, the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Volunteer NH!, and/or the Corporation for National and Community Service, and it will not be disclosed outside of these entities without prior written permission.

Furthermore, I authorize the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program to verify the information included on this application and in my resume and specifically waive my rights to confidentiality concerning a criminal record check, reference check and employment verification. I release the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program and all others, including but not limited to the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and its member programs, from liability in connection with the same.

Signature ____________________________________________ Date ______________________________

This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, political affiliation, or, in most instances, religion.

As a reminder, applications will not be considered unless all of the following items are enclosed:

- Resume
- Personal Statement
- A Copy of Current Driver’s License
- Contact Information for 3 Professional or academic References.
- Completed and Signed Application

Thank you for taking the time to complete an application for the AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program.
Resources

Budgeting


Couponing

https://www.joinhoney.com/

SNAP and Benefit Programs


Housing

https://www.facebook.com/groups/NHAmieriCorpsRoommateFinder/#_=_
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MpJgPTuTfu1g2OCHFE8NyCgclVMDXalIXlaO176Y4XE/viewform?edit_requested=true

Recreation

https://stayworkplay.org/  https://www.nhstateparks.org/
References

