



Welcome New Members!

Now is the time to start exploring your options if you have student loans for your term of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA member! Many members are excited to learn that most **federally-**backed student loans are eligible for forbearance during their service term. If you have questions about if your student loans, reach out to your loan holders to verify what types of loans you have and if they will be eligible for AmeriCorps forbearance! We also encourage members to explore other options for their student loans such as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Requesting Forbearance on Student Loans

- AmeriCorps members with qualified **federal** student loans in repayment are eligible for forbearance during their term of service; learn more [here](#).
 - Most federally-guaranteed student loans in your name are eligible, however you must check with your loan holder.
 - **Private** loan companies may not recognize AmeriCorps forbearance. If necessary be sure to pursue all available forbearance or deferment options availed through your loan holder – economic hardship, for example, is a common option.
- It is important to understand that CNCS only verifies your service as an AmeriCorps member, **your loan holder will ultimately approve/reject your forbearance request**.
 - If your loan holder tells you that your student loan does not qualify for forbearance based upon your national service, ask if your service qualifies you for some other type of forbearance or for a deferment.
- When considering forbearance, ask your loan servicers directly about your loan eligibility, terms, interest, etc. as these may differ from one servicer and from one loan to the next.
- Members get the most benefit if requesting forbearance at the beginning of their service.
- Requesting forbearance through your MyAmeriCorps portal is the easiest way to track the process:
 - On your MyAmeriCorps Home Page, click on the “Create Forbearance” link to bring up the page where you can request forbearance.
 - Follow the instructions. Select your current term of service and identify the company that holds your student loan.
 - When you click on “submit,” a request will be sent electronically to your loan company. This request will verify your involvement in AmeriCorps and request that your qualified loans be put in forbearance during your service period.

Your loan holder will notify you when they have acted upon your request. You should contact your loan holder if you have not heard from them within four weeks of submitting your information online. You can also check the status of your forbearance request in your My AmeriCorps account.

Loan Interest Accrual

- Certain types of student loans will continue to accrue interest even while in forbearance. Check with your loan servicer for details on your loans.
- Interest that accrues during service on qualified loans in AmeriCorps forbearance is eligible for payoff through CNCS (in addition to the education award). Upon successful completion of your term of service, members can request an Interest Accrual Payment through their MyAmeriCorps Portal. This request is then sent to your loan servicer.
- Learn more about [Postponing Student Loan Payments and Getting Interest Paid](#).

Important Websites for Information on Student Loans:

[National Student Loan Data System](#) - Retrieve your loan information from the US Department of Education's central database for student aid. This will give you detailed information on what types of federal loans you have.

[Federal Student Aid](#): An Office of the US Department of Education - Learn more about preparing financially for and for after college. Learn more about financial aid and how to manage your student loans.

[Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: Paying for College](#) - Get help making informed financial decisions about how to pay for college and repaying student debt. This site has a great step-by-step questionnaire that will personalize options based on your specific situation.



Helpful Tips for AmeriCorps Members & Student Loans

- Members are eligible for forbearance and interest payoff on qualified federal loans during their service through AmeriCorps; learn more [here](#).
- AmeriCorps members should look into **Income-Based Repayment** or **Pay-As-You-Earn** options through www.studentloans.gov.
- Your service also qualifies for **Public Service Loan Forgiveness** (after 10 years of public service employment, the remainder of qualifying loans will be forgiven; see more below).
- Members are encouraged to enroll in income-based loan repayment plans right away if it makes sense with their loan – this is the best repayment plan for most borrowers **INSTEAD** of forbearance (which doesn't take advantage of income based payment options):
 - You can have a payment as low as 0 dollars based on your salary (i.e., living allowance) if you are on an income-based repayment plan.
 - If you serve for a year while making payments under any qualified repayment plan, it also counts as 12 of the 120 payments required for Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

- The Segal Education Award may be used to make a lump-sum payment once service has been completed.
- *Any AmeriCorps or other public service after Oct. 1, 2007 can count retroactively for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (as long as you are in a qualifying repayment plan).*

Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

AmeriCorps service is eligible for the PSLF; this program allows qualifying federal student loans to be forgiven after 10 years (120 months) of qualifying, on-time payments while working at a qualified employer. You may also receive credit by making a lump sum payment from the education award toward a qualified loan. Please read the resources below to learn more:

- Federal Student Aid overview of PSLF: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/charts/public-service>
- [PSLF Fact Sheet](#)
- [PSLF Q&As](#) (updated Nov 2014)
- Additional [FAQs from CFPB](#)
- [PSLF Employment Certification Form](#)

The below team member can help you certify that you work for a qualifying employer and can complete the Certification Form:

Hannah Zelmer
Business Manager
hzelmer@mnyouth.net
651-528-8584