



AmeriCorps Member Position Description

TNOYS AmeriCorps

Title: Youth Support Specialist AmeriCorps Member	Member Type: Full Time (1700 hours)
Host Site: Connections Individual and Family Services, Inc.	Immediate Supervisor: Charles Hegstrom

The mission of Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) is to strengthen services and support for Texas youth and families to help them overcome challenges and achieve healthy development.

TNOYS AmeriCorps program will provide young adults with lived expertise with professional development and employment opportunities to member organizations (youth service providers) across Texas. Lived experience is defined as someone who has faced homelessness, foster care, juvenile justice, mental health, or involvement in other social service systems. This program will create employment opportunities for young people with lived experience that provides professional development to youth in the systems that impact/have impacted them.

This service opportunity is highly interpersonal and requires that members serve well with others. Members must be able to accommodate changing service conditions and diverse points of view. Members must learn to balance both program identity and AmeriCorps identity. Members will support Host Sites by providing services to youth to support their transition into adulthood, focusing on preparing the youth for employment, including improving financial literacy and professional skill development. As near-peers, AmeriCorps members will use their own lived experience to provide insight to the youth they serve.

Service Hours

TNOYS AmeriCorps members serve a minimum of 1700 hours over a 12-month period, or an average of 40 hours per week. In addition, all members are expected to participate in centralized AmeriCorps training – including, but not limited to initial pre-service orientation and Life after AmeriCorps training. Members are also required to participate in any national service days scheduled during their term of service. A calendar of required trainings and service projects is provided at pre-service orientation. Members serve during program hours, defined as Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, and some weekend and evening hours as needed. Depending on COVID-19 guidance or member service needs, service may be in-person as well as remote. TNOYS operates a telecommunicating work environment and as such, the member will be expected to adhere to our guidelines around remote work. Members are expected to serve through their end date even if the minimum hour requirement is met prior to this date.

TNOYS AmeriCorps is available to all, without regard to religion, race, color, national origin, gender, political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, creed, or veteran status.

Primary Role and Expectations Goals

The primary role and expectations of the Youth Support Specialist AmeriCorps member placed will work directly with Youth and Young Adults (YYA) to achieve the following program goals:

- Provide support to youth with job searching skills and plan to develop short/long-term career goals
- Provide Interview and resume preparation to youth using skills learned in TNOYS training
- Provide career and secondary education exploration to youth and support youth to finish high school credits or secure GED
- Provide support to youth on managing finances such as managing money, setting up and managing bank accounts, and learning about credit and budgeting
- Deliver soft and life skills training to support youth's transition into adulthood
- Improve positive social skills, by fostering relationships with youth and using positive reinforcement techniques

Host Site Job Duties

Connections Individual and Family Services is a safe and secure alternative to the "streets" for homeless, abused, or at-risk youth. The purpose of this role is to provide for a safe and secure environment for either youth ages 5-17 in a licensed emergency shelter or for older youth ages 18-21 in the Transitional Living Program (TLP).

The Youth Support Specialist's duties and responsibilities include:

- Assist residents in the day-to-day activities, providing supervision and understanding of the residential program's structure and daily milieu.
- Fulfill programmatic duties and activities (such as building self sufficiency and individual planning) with an understanding and implementation lense that reflect a trauma informed care approach and encourage positive youth development.
- Follow proper reporting and documentation structure as it relates to each resident (in the resident's Daily Logbook).
- Support with preparing and serving meals/snacks; Assist in the preparation of the next meal to be as needed.
- Attend scheduled trainings and meetings as directed; actively engage and provide suggestions or quality improvement for the program.
- Assist the youth with learning independent living skills, including establishing healthy leisure skills, self-care skills, and other core strategies as outlined by the Ansel-Casey life skills assessment.
- Assist youth with understanding and utilizing area resources for meeting medical and mental health needs.

Youth Support Specialists should remember to:

- Act cooperatively with all staff, program coordinators, shelter staff and counselors.
- Model appropriate behavior and social skills at all times.
- Interact with the staff and residents in a positive manner, providing a nurturing and secure environment at all times.

Qualifications

Members must be at least 21 years of age with lived experience within the seven systems focus areas as follows: housing/homelessness, child welfare/foster care, juvenile justice, mental/behavioral health, education, workforce, and victim services/commercial sexual. Minimum: High school diploma or GED. Interest in serving vulnerable populations. A U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident. Ability to serve flexible hours as requested - some Saturdays and evenings. Access to reliable transportation to and from the host

site on a daily basis.

This position requires work with vulnerable populations. As such, it requires a three-part National Service Criminal History Check, including an FBI fingerprint background check, state of residence/work criminal background check, and National Sex Offender Registry check.

Essential Functions

Adhere to professional standards, such as reporting for service on-time, staying on task, being friendly and helpful on site and in the community, and maintaining a professional manner and appearance. Members are required to complete and submit timesheets to the appropriate onsite supervisor for signature and approval. Members are required to call in to the appropriate site supervisor and any relevant site staff when absent or late to the program or scheduled service event. Chronic tardiness and absenteeism are grounds for suspension and/or dismissal. Members who miss three consecutive days or more of scheduled service due to illness or other compelling circumstance, such as a family emergency, must provide a doctor's note or other similar documentation explaining the reason for the absences.

Members must have a strong commitment to community service, to communicating effectively with staff, with fellow members, community partners and AmeriCorps staff. Members must also exhibit a strong ethic of service (attendance, record-keeping, completing timesheets in a timely fashion, etc.). Members are required to adhere to all codes of conduct and or related policies and procedures of host site program, TNOYS and AmeriCorps. Members are required to wear the AmeriCorps logo during service.

COVID-19 Guidelines

Member safety is important to TNOYS and all host sites. If a member feels uncomfortable serving due to COVID-19 concerns, they should reach out to their host site supervisor and/or TNOYS for accommodations. In the event that the COVID-19 pandemic impacts the ability of members to implement in-person service activities, members will conduct aligned teleservice activities. In addition, if a member is exposed to COVID-19, they will follow the CDC guidelines for quarantining and testing before returning to in-person activities. AmeriCorps defines Teleservice as: “meaningfully serving or participating in training from a remote location where a host site supervisor is unable to physically be present but will verify hours served by an AmeriCorps member.” Additional Teleservice Qualifications: access to internet, ability to serve remotely, including communication via video conferencing, and ability to serve independently.

AmeriCorps Disaster Relief Effort

In the event of a local, state, or federal disaster declaration, AmeriCorps members may be asked on a volunteer basis or be required by OneStar to activate to assist in disaster response and recovery activities within their communities. This may involve virtual service opportunities or in-person service opportunities. This may include service opportunities outside of the member’s standard service hours or in place of their standard service duties. In the event of a large-scale, high needs local, state, or federal disaster, AmeriCorps members may voluntarily or be required by OneStar to deploy to an area outside of their service area to assist in disaster response and recovery activities.

All of the above duties and responsibilities are essential position functions are subject to reasonable accommodation.