

Frequently Asked Questions

BIG SKY WATERSHED CORPS

The BSWC is a partnership between three statewide conservation-based organizations.

Please contact us for more information!



*Building and Uniting
Watershed Communities*

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The Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) will assist Montana's watershed communities to make a measurable difference in local conservation efforts while bolstering the experience of young professionals emerging from academia.

AmeriCorps members will focus on watershed research, planning and project implementation, watershed education & outreach and community engagement.

A collaborative effort of the Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC), the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) and the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC), the BSWC will recruit, train & support 27 AmeriCorps members selected by qualifying organizations in Montana.

BENEFITS

What are the benefits of being a host site?

Host sites will gain the assistance of a highly motivated college graduate to assist with project implementation and program capacity building. Host supervisors will also benefit from training sessions provided by the program.

What are the benefits of being a corps member?

While in service, a corps member will receive student loan forbearance (for qualified loans), health insurance and a living stipend of \$13,732. Members are also eligible to receive an education award of \$5,920 upon successful completion of the program.

PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Who is administering the Big Sky Watershed Corps?

MCC will disburse corps member stipends, health insurance and benefits and will conduct programmatic monitoring and evaluation. MCC, MWCC and SWCDM will help identify and develop potential host sites and corps member projects.

When will the member start and end their term of service with the host site?

Corps members will complete 1700 hours between January and the end of November

Who will pay for the member's health insurance?

MCC will provide health insurance during the corps member's 10.5 month long service.

What is the frequency and duration of mandatory trainings during a member's service?

Four training events will be provided. There will be three 3 day events and one 2 day event. These include orientation (January), education and outreach skills training (February), technical skills training (May), and a graduation celebration of service (November).

Who covers the cost of the trainings?

Corps member transportation, food and lodging will be provided by the program for mandatory training events.

BSWC: Frequently Asked Questions

Is vacation and sick leave included in the 1700 hours that a member will serve?

Yes. Corps members receive 5 days of vacation. Hosts determine the timing of vacation/sick leave/holidays.

Who will recruit corps members?

MCC will recruit interested, eligible corps members for host review and selection. Host sites are encouraged to recommend local individuals for consideration in the interview process.

Will the host site be involved in the interview process?

Yes. Host sites are responsible to contact and interview candidates that have passed an initial screening by the BSWC, and make all final decisions.

What happens if a member needs to leave the program early?

A corps member can be replaced if less than 15% of the term has been completed [255 hours].

REQUIREMENTS

How much does it cost to host a Big Sky Watershed Corps Member?

Host sites are responsible for a cash cost share of \$12,250. In addition, hosts will provide a vehicle with gas or reimburse corps members at the current IRS rate per mile for work-related travel.

Is there any funding assistance available to lower the cost share?

Yes, program partners have secured some financial resources to assist host sites that are unable to meet the full match requirement and are committed to identifying other sources of support.

Does the entire cost share need to be paid up front?

No. Half of the cost share is required initially and the second half within the first 6 months. MCC will work with organizations to create an appropriate payment schedule that meets both programmatic and host site needs.

How much supervisory support needs to be provided to a member?

A minimum of 10 hours per week but hosts are encouraged to provide ongoing supervision.

What equipment needs to be provided to a member?

Corps members need suitable office space with a telephone, computer and internet access.

OBJECTIVES

Can a member be used strictly for daily office tasks?

Activities such as answering the phone, making copies, typing and filing may be necessary but should not form the focus of a corps member's work.

What objectives must host sites meet?

Corps member activities must help meet core programmatic goals of watershed health and protection, education and outreach, member development and volunteer generation. Projects that meet all 4 goals will better compete for limited member slots.

What are sample deliverables for program objectives?

Corps member deliverables will include: the number of volunteers recruited, trained and retained that assist with watershed improvement efforts; the number of miles of waterways improved; the number of data sets collected; and the development and delivery of educational materials/individuals educated, workshops and events with students and community members.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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The Big Sky Watershed Corps supports local efforts for healthy watershed communities.