



# Washington Service Corps

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**Washington Service Corps created in 1983**

**Programs include Reading Corps, Ready\*Corps, and services to at-risk youths and people with disabilities**

The Washington Service Corps was created by the state legislature in 1983 to provide citizens with opportunities to serve their communities. Administered by the Employment Security Department, the Service Corps partners with private, non-profit organizations and local governments to address unmet community needs and to provide citizens with meaningful service experiences.

Service Corps projects are as varied as the agencies with which they work. Many are designed to improve students' educational achievement, some are directed at improving the physical environment and quality of life, and still others focus on public safety, public health and human needs. The type of experience gained in these programs is just as varied, ranging from working with students in public schools to building houses for low-income families. The Service Corps has members in **23** teams across the state and many more individual placements within organizations across the state.

## **Service Corps programs**

### ***Washington Reading Corps***

The Reading Corps is operated by a partnership of Employment Security, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Commission for National and Community Service and seven project sites. The mission is to improve the reading abilities of struggling readers through research-based tutoring and effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, Americorps, business and state partners.

Historically, Reading Corps members have worked to improve the literacy of students in kindergarten through sixth grade. But during the 2006-07 school year, the Reading Corps also participated in an early-learning pilot project to prepare pre-school-age children to enter kindergarten.

### ***Washington Ready\*Corps***

Ready\*Corps helps to improve the disaster preparedness of communities across Washington, especially those with a lot of low-income residents. The program focuses on homeland-security issues related to preparedness, emergency planning and community outreach. Ready\*Corps members serve with a variety of agencies and organizations, including emergency management offices, fire and sheriff departments, local Red Cross chapters and other community-based organizations.

### ***WorkSource Youth Project***

The Washington Service Corps places members at WorkSource centers across the state to conduct outreach to teens and young adults. Service Corps members meet with students at high schools, community and technical colleges, and other gathering places to inform them about the many employment services available to them at WorkSource centers.

### ***Mentoring children of jail/prison inmates***

Service Corps members develop mentoring programs for children who have parents in jail or prison. The mission is to create systems to identify affected children, recruit and train mentors, develop systems and policies to match mentors with affected children, market the program, and track and evaluate the program.

**New initiatives  
target  
student  
nutrition,  
drop-out  
prevention,  
public health,  
emergency  
medical  
preparedness**

### ***Improving workforce development services for people with disabilities***

In partnership with the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment, the Service Corps has placed members in 12 WorkSource centers across the state. The members work with WorkSource staff to improve access, services and outcomes for job seekers who have disabilities.

### ***AppleCorps***

Beginning in September 2008, the Service Corps will partner with Solid Ground (a Seattle-based non-profit group) to place Service Corps members in Seattle elementary schools that have the highest rates of students receiving free and reduced-cost meals. The goal is to reduce obesity and improve nutrition and health by developing wellness policies, providing structured recess activities, leading school gardening activities, and educating students and families about healthy eating.

### ***Building Bridges***

In the July 2008-June 2009 fiscal year, the Service Corps is partnering with the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction to support the Building Bridges project. Building Bridges was created by the 2007 state legislature to involve schools, families and communities in building a comprehensive dropout-prevention, intervention and retrieval system for at-risk middle- and high-school students. Targeted populations will include youths in foster care, in the juvenile justice system and in special education, and those who have dropped out of school. Service Corps members will form relationships with the students, organize peer support networks, track student progress and make sure the students are turning in homework, showing up for school and studying for tests.

### ***Medical Reserve Corps***

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) coordinates the skills of practicing and retired physicians, nurses, other health professionals and other citizens who are interested in health issues and eager to volunteer to address their communities' public health needs and to help during large-scale emergencies. The Service Corps will help recruit and retain medical and non-medical volunteers to join local MRC units; develop and distribute MRC newsletters and help with other marketing activities; assist with outreach activities for low-income, special-needs and/or limited-English-speaking residents; distribute educational materials about the need for immunizations; and provide additional support for health-screening efforts.



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