

Using Your End of Service Benefits - AmeriCorps VISTA members

Guiding you through your life after AmeriCorps.

This guide is designed to provide you with a clearer understanding of what your End of Service Benefits are and how you can use them. This manual includes step-by-step instructions that will guide you from the beginning of the process until the very end. If you have any questions or concerns about any of these processes, discuss them with your Program Director.

We wish you all the best in your life after AmeriCorps!

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End of Service Stipend

AmeriCorps VISTA member only

The End of Service Stipend is one of the two End of Service award options you were able to choose from when you began your VISTA service. The End of Service stipend is equal to \$1,800 before taxes (as it is considered taxable income just like your Living Allowance) and will be dispersed to you within your **last two** Living Allowance payments.

- If you have chosen the End of Service Stipend, you **cannot** switch to the Segal Education Award.
- If you have chosen the Segal Education Award, you have until your 10th month of service to switch and choose the End of Service Stipend. After the 10th month of service, you cannot change your End of Service award option.

Segal Education Award

The Segal Education Award is available for all AmeriCorps members and is tied to the maximum amount of the U.S. Department of Education's Pell Grant (for that fiscal year.) The amount of your Segal Education Award is based on your status, with full-time members receiving the full Pell Grant amount and those serving less hours receiving a smaller award.

Currently, AmeriCorps members may earn up to the value of two full-time education awards and have seven years from the date they earned each award to use it. If you do not use the full amount of your award within seven years, the remaining amount will expire.

What can the Segal Education Award be used for?

The Segal Education Award is unique because it can be used for more than one purpose.

Loan Repayment

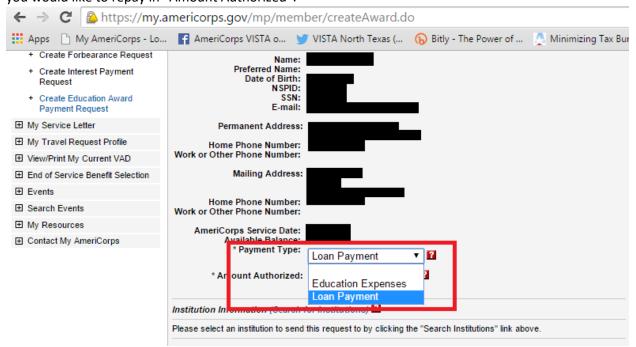
Perhaps the most popular use for the Segal Education Award is loan repayment. The Segal Education Award can only be used on a loan backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (except PLUS Loans to parents of students) or under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Health Service Act. You may also use your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to repay a student loan made to you by a state agency, including state institutions of higher education. The Segal Education Award cannot be used to repay private loans. View the list of qualified federal student loans here.

How to Repay a Qualified Loan

To use your Segal Education Award to repay a loan, you must first login to my.americorps.gov. Once you login, you will notice that you have new My Education Award options. If you do not have these new options, please contact the National Service Hotline.



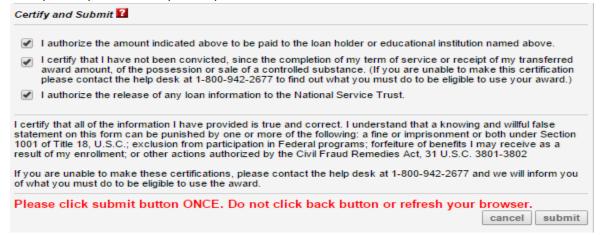
• Click on "Create Education Award Payment Request" to be redirected to this page. Scroll down to the "Payment Type" drown down menu and select "Loan Payment". Then type in the amount you would like to repay in "Amount Authorized".



 You will now select the Institution. Use the "Search for Institutions" link to find and select your loan borrower. If your loan provider has more than one option, ensure you select the option that has DOE (Department of Education) in its title.

* Payment Type: * Amount Authorized:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Institution Information (Search for Please select an institution to send the	r Institutions) are institutions are institutions are institutions are institutions.	
Certify and Submit		

Finally, certify and submit your request.



• When you click on "submit", a notice will be sent electronically to your educational or loan institution. A record of your request will appear in your account home page. The school or loan holder will complete their portion of the form and return it electronically to CNCS. They will fill in the amount for which you are eligible if the request is for current educational expenses or they will provide the payoff amount and loan type if the request is for a student loan. The institution will certify the accuracy of the information and submit it to CNCS for payment. When you request a payment, the "Available Balance" will be adjusted by the amount of the request. Once the payment is disbursed, the "Award Balance" will be adjusted by the amount disbursed. All payment requests that are not acted upon will be cancelled after 90 days and your "Available Balance" and "Award Balance" will be adjusted accordingly. If for some reason the institution denies the request for payment, they should have entered comments explaining the reason for the denial.

Pay Current Educational Expenses

The Segal Education Award can be used for educational expenses at higher educational institutions, both domestic and foreign, that currently participate in the Department of Education's Title IV student aid programs, referred to as "Title IV schools." The education award can also be used for programs of education, apprenticeship, or on the job training that have been approved for educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. Educational expenses that can be paid include:

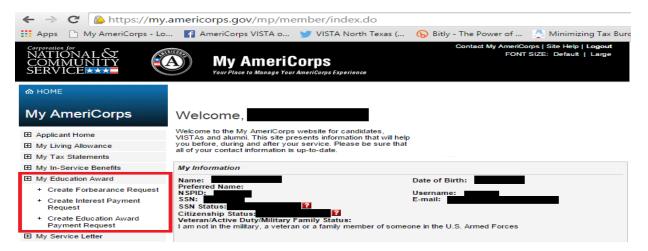
- The "Cost of Attendance" (COA) for a degree- or certificate-granting program (including tuition, books and supplies, transportation, room and board, and other expenses). Each Title IV school's financial aid office determines their students' COA based upon standard U.S. DOE guidance.
- Educational expenses for non-degree courses, such as continuing education courses or workshops offered by Title IV schools. Educational expenses that can be paid normally include tuition & fees, books, and supplies, as determined by the school's administrative office.
- Courses or training programs authorized under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill.

Matching Institutions

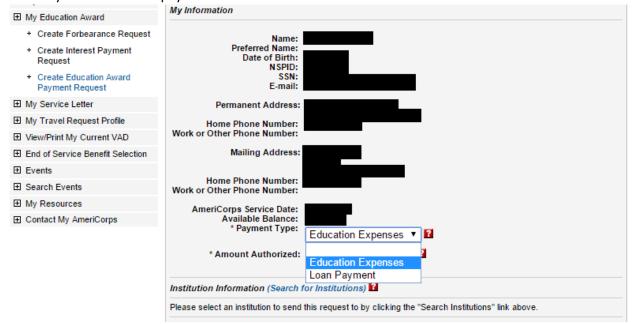
Many institutions offer to match the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or make available to AmeriCorps alumni other financial aid benefits, such as scholarships, tuition waivers, and in-state tuition. For a list of those institutions, <u>click here!</u>

How to Pay Current Educational Expenses

To use your Segal Education Award to pay current educational expenses, you must first login to my.americorps.gov. Once you login, you will notice that you have new My Education Award options. If you do not have these new options, please contact the National Service Hotline.



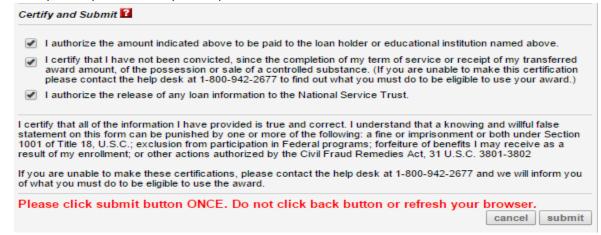
• Click on "Create Education Award Payment Request" to be redirected to this page. Scroll down to the "Payment Type" drown down menu and select "Education Expenses". Then type in the amount you would like to pay in "Amount Authorized".



• You will now select the Institution. Use the "Search for Institutions" link to find and select your school.

* Payment Type: * Amount Authorized:	7
Institution Information (Search for Please select an institution to send thi	Institutions) 12 s request to by clicking the "Search Institutions" link above.
Certify and Submit	

Finally, certify and submit your request.



- When you click on "submit", a notice will be sent electronically to your educational or loan institution. A record of your request will appear in your account home page. The school or loan holder will complete their portion of the form and return it electronically to CNCS. They will fill in the amount for which you are eligible if the request is for current educational expenses or they will provide the payoff amount and loan type if the request is for a student loan. The institution will certify the accuracy of the information and submit it to CNCS for payment. When you request a payment, the "Available Balance" will be adjusted by the amount of the request. Once the payment is disbursed, the "Award Balance" will be adjusted by the amount disbursed.
- All payment requests that are not acted upon will be cancelled after 90 days and your "Available Balance" and "Award Balance" will be adjusted accordingly. If for some reason the institution denies the request for payment, they should have entered comments explaining the reason for the denial.

Transferring an Education Award

AmeriCorps State and National Members Only

The Serve America Act allows the transfer of education awards earned by a member who successfully completes a term of service in AmeriCorps State and National programs, under specific conditions. To transfer your award, you must be at least 55 years old at the start of service and the award must go to your child, stepchild, grandchild, step-grandchild, or foster child.

Interest Repayment

Individuals who have successfully completed a term of service are eligible to have the National Trust pay as much as 100% of the interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. Remember that interest payments, as well as payments made from your education award account, are considered by the IRS to be taxable income in the year in which a payment is made.

How to Apply for an Interest Payment

To apply for an interest payment, you must first login to my.americorps.gov. Once you login, you will notice that you have new My Education Award options. If you do not have these new options, please contact the National Service Hotline.



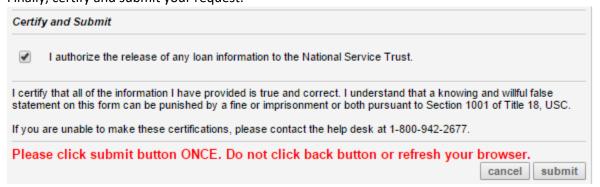
• Click on "Create Interest Payment Request" to be redirected to this page. Scroll down to the "Term of service" drop down menu and select the appropriate term.



 You will now select the Institution. Use the "Search for Institutions" link to find and select your loan borrower. If your loan provider has more than one option, ensure you select the option that has DOE (Department of Education) in its title.

Institution Information (Search for Institutions)			
Please select an institution to send this request to by clicking the "Search Institutions" link above.			
Comments: If you have more than one loan wand loan type.	vith the institution you specified you may specify a particular loan number		

• Finally, certify and submit your request.



When you click on "submit", a notice will be sent electronically to your educational or loan
institution. A record of your request will appear in your account home page. The school or loan
holder will complete their portion of the form and return it electronically to CNCS. They will fill
in the amount for which you are eligible. The institution will certify the accuracy of the
information and submit it to CNCS for payment.

Tax Implications

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, unlike most other forms of scholarships and fellowships, is subject to federal tax in the year each payment is made. It is considered taxable income regardless of whether it's used for current educational expenses or to repay a qualified student loan. Interest that is paid on a qualified student loan is also subject to income taxes in the year the payment is made to the loan holder.

If your education award and interest payments total **more than \$600** in a calendar year, in January of the following year, CNCS will send you an IRS Form 1099 to be used in preparing your income tax return. The total sum of interest payments and the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award payments for that calendar year will be listed together on the 1099 form.

If you plan on redeeming more than \$600 in a calendar year, be aware of how it will affect your tax bracket.

Tax Relief

While you are responsible for taxes on your education award and other AmeriCorps benefits, you may be eligible for other tax relief through the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education explains tax benefits that may be available to taxpayers who are paying for their higher educational expenses or repaying student loans. AmeriCorps members who have used their education awards and have had interest payments made on their behalf, may be eligible for these deductions. Contact a tax professional or the Internal Revenue Service for details.

AmeriCorps Alums

Join AmeriCorps Alums, the official organization for AmeriCorps alumni created by alums, for alums by visiting <u>americorpsalums.org</u>.