

Conservation Fellow Handbook



2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Introduction and Purpose	2
I. MCC Mission Statement	2
II. Montana Conservation Corps History	2
III. Montana Conservation Corps Program Outcomes	3
Section 2: Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines	4
I. General Policies	4
A. Corps Member Rights and Responsibilities	4
B. General Code of Conduct	4
C. MCC Safety Policy	5
D. AmeriCorps	6
E. Drug Free Workplace Policy	7
F. Sexual Harassment	8
G. MCC Commitment to Inclusion and Diversity	9
H. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy	10
I. Information on Criminal Background Checks	10
III. General Procedures	11
A. Disciplinary Action Procedures	11
B. Termination	12
C. Grievance Procedures	13
D. Procedures for Work-Related Injuries	14
III. Timesheets and Other Reports	14
A. Verifying and Recording Hours	14
B. Reporting Requirements	15
C. Performance Evaluations	15
IV. Host Site	15
A. Uniform Policy	15
B. Work Site Policies	16
Section 3: Phone Numbers and Resources	17
A. MCC Emergency Contact Numbers	17
B. Other Emergency Contact Numbers	17
C. National and Local Reporting and Support Hotlines	17

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Montana Conservation Corps is a nonprofit organization that inspires young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities. Each season MCC enrolls over 500 teens and young adult AmeriCorps members in programs that integrate exemplary leadership training and hands-on service. MCC corps members complete 300,000 hours of conservation service every year.

I. MCC MISSION STATEMENT

Montana Conservation Corps inspires young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land and engaged citizens who improve their communities.

II. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS HISTORY

MCC was established in 1991, by the Human Resource Development Councils in Billings, Bozeman, and Kalispell. At that time, it was primarily a summer program serving disadvantaged youth. In 1993, the AmeriCorps National Service Program began funding Montana Conservation Corps and enabled the progression to a year-round program. In 1995, the Montana Board of Crime Control granted MCC funds to develop CorpsLINK, a program aimed at utilizing corps members to supervise youth performing community service and to mentor at-risk youth. These programs began utilizing corps members to perform service projects addressing community needs in addition to performing natural resource projects.

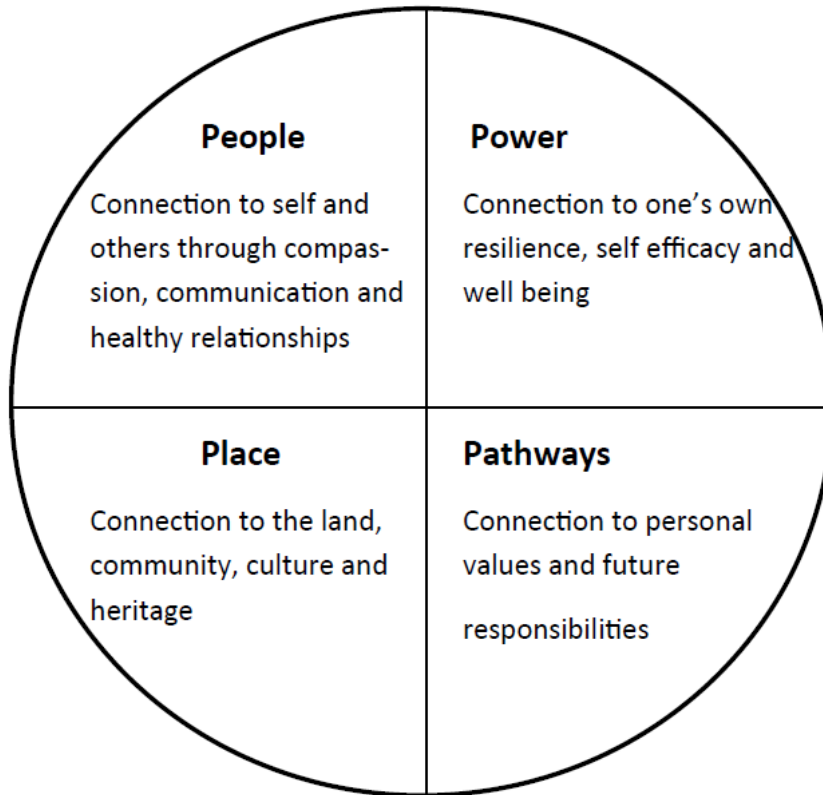
MCC has corps members based in four regions around the state: Greater Yellowstone based out of Bozeman, Central Divide based out of Helena, Northern Rockies based out of Kalispell, and Western Wildlands based out of Missoula. The state office staff in Bozeman manages the Fellow program and the agency overall, and a volunteer Board of Directors governs the organization. MCC crews and Fellows do a variety of projects for natural resource agencies including: recreation area management, trail construction and repair, fence building, cave restoration, wildlife habitat improvement, stream rehabilitation, and playground construction. Community service projects performed by MCC crews include weatherizing low-income homes, distributing food to the needy and building community gardens.

Support for MCC comes from many individuals and organizations that have a keen interest in the energy and enthusiasm of our young people. Over 200 public and private agencies sponsor MCC projects each year, with most of our financial support coming from City, County, State and Federal land management agencies. AmeriCorps funding through the Governor's Office of Community Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service accounts for a little less than half of our budget with project sponsors, donors and partners providing the remaining funding to facilitate our initiatives.

For many MCC members, working to improve Montana's environment generates lifelong feelings of satisfaction, self-worth, and a commitment to serving their community. We want their time with MCC to be challenging—a time for you to develop new skills, new knowledge, and a stronger commitment to the people, communities, and natural resources of Montana. In the words of former President Teddy Roosevelt, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

III. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS PROGRAM OUTCOMES

MCC’s approach to teaching leadership and conservation to young adults is based on the experiential learning cycle which actively facilitates learning through the following sequence: Concrete Experience (the activity), Reflective Observation (reflection on the activity), Abstract Conceptualization (gained knowledge or skill) and Active Experimentation (trying out new skills and abilities). We know that by intentionally facilitating activities rather than leaving it up to chance, we significantly increase the potential for new learning and skill development. Through the four program outcomes outlined in the graphic below (People, Place, Power and Pathways), MCC participants will find an increased sense of purpose.



People Learning Goal

Cultivate greater self-awareness and connection to others through compassion, positive communication and healthy relationships.

Place Learning Goal

Explore our connection to the land, community, culture and heritage

Power Learning Goal

Develop confidence that fosters resilience, self-efficacy and well-being

Pathways Learning Goal

Envision future pathways to express personal civic and professional values in the world.

SECTION 2: POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

I. GENERAL POLICIES

A. CORPS MEMBER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As with any group of individuals working together, MCC corps members (“corps members” = AmeriCorps members. This includes leaders, members, and Fellows, alike) must follow certain rules and regulations in order to be effective. The rights and responsibilities listed below are policies that should guide your term of service.

- In order to earn an education award, each corps member must satisfactorily complete the term of service. The number of hours (1700, 900, 675, 450 or 300) is **only a minimum requirement**. Everyone will work more hours in order to complete their term of service satisfactorily.
- All MCC adult participants must attend one public meeting and complete volunteer service with an outside nonprofit organization or agency in order to successfully complete their term of service.
- Satisfactory completion also includes good attendance, being a law-abiding citizen, having a positive and cooperative attitude, performing quality service work, and showing respect toward others in the program and in the community.
- Corps members receive a living allowance paid in biweekly installments. This living allowance is not a “wage” per AmeriCorps regulations. However, the living allowance is considered **taxable** income.
- Corps members are covered by Worker’s Compensation Insurance while engaged in MCC activities.
- There is a 30-day probationary period for all corps members. Corps members may contact program staff if there is any question as to whether they have successfully completed the probationary period.
- Participants may earn no more than 20% of their total service hours during training and education. The remaining 80% must be earned performing service activities.
- Corps members serving summer terms will not receive paid time off during their term of service. Extenuating circumstances can be discussed with Host Site supervisors, but MCC Staff will have final approval to ensure programmatic needs are met. If time off is approved, it will be unpaid.
- There will be certain instances and times when time off will NOT be approved due to the needs of the host site or the program; this is particularly true from June through September, and at statewide gatherings.
- If a corps member is unable to return to work within a 3-week time period due to injury, illness or personal situation, the corps member may be subject to termination from the program. The corps member may, however, qualify for a ‘compelling personal circumstance’ which would allow them to receive a pro-rated AmeriCorps education award.

B. GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

As representatives of MCC and AmeriCorps, corps members serve as role models in the community. They are expected to maintain an exemplary standard of professional conduct and identify as members of AmeriCorps and MCC at all times. The MCC General Code of Conduct includes:

- Mutual respect is the key to all relationships. Corps members are expected to show respect when interacting with other corps members, staff, project partners and community members.
- Corps members are expected and encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the program at the level of their ability.
- Corps members shall exhibit a high level of commitment and a positive attitude toward the organization, staff and their service work.
- Corps members should display a strong work ethic and follow directions.
- The MCC environment must be a safe place in which to work. Aggressive behavior, abusive language, intimidation and fighting are prohibited.
- Possession or use of firearms or other weapons when engaged in MCC activities is prohibited.
- Stealing or vandalizing any MCC or partner property, project equipment, or materials is prohibited.
- No alcohol or illegal drugs are allowed at any time a corps member is representing MCC. (This includes

traveling to and from the worksite, at the worksite, in any MCC spike camp, on volunteer projects, serving volunteer hours, attending public meetings or at any corps member gathering or training.)

- MCC prohibits intimate or family relationships within the chain of command. The intent of this policy is to prevent compromising the ability to supervise.
- MCC prohibits the personal use of MCC or partner-related materials, equipment or resources.

MCC maintains disciplinary action procedures to support our mission to our corps members, the community and the environment. Violation of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, including possible termination. Participants must immediately report any violation or suspicion of violation of MCC's General Code of Conduct or other policies to regional or state program staff.

C. MCC SAFETY POLICY

It is the policy of Montana Conservation Corps to provide all employees and AmeriCorps or youth participants with a safe and healthy workplace. Safety is of such importance that it will take precedence over productivity whenever necessary to protect employees or participants. An effective health and safety program is an integral part of conducting our work; **safety awareness must be part of everything we do and it must be everyone's responsibility.**

Montana Conservation Corps is committed to providing safe and healthy conditions for each of its employees and participants. In return, we expect each employee and participant to recognize their obligations to conduct themselves in a way that supports both their own safety and the safety of their co-workers. To ensure a safe working environment is maintained, all employees and participants shall actively promote safety and incident prevention as a primary part of their normal job functions.

Each employee and participant is responsible for implementing this policy by continually observing safety practices, guidelines and standards in all program activities and locations including during transportation, while on the project site, and during educational and recreational activities. It is the goal of this policy to minimize incidents for everyone in every area of the program. Full cooperation of all employees and participants at all levels is essential to achieve this goal successfully.

General safety requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Report any unsafe conditions immediately—all unsafe conditions must be corrected prior to commencing work. If it cannot be done safely, it should not be done at all.
- Attend all trainings and safety discussions.
- Report any incident, injury or illness immediately.
- Report the use of any medication that could cause physical or mental impairment or diminished concentration at work to your supervisor.
- Ensure that all hazards are defined for each scope of work prior to commencing.
- Wear all appropriate work clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE). If in doubt, wear the protective clothing and safety gear.
- Keep worksites hazard-free by storing tools and materials properly and by cleaning up garbage and spills immediately.
- Don't wear dangling jewelry and loose-fitting clothing that may become caught by tools and machinery.
- Operate only the equipment and/or tools that you have been trained and authorized to use.
- Absolutely No Horseplay is permitted.
- Be alert! Always be aware of what is happening around you.
- Fall protection is required when working over six feet high.
- Use powered equipment and all tools as designed.
- Use proper lifting technique.

D. AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps engages more than 80,000 people in intensive national service each year at more than 21,000 locations including nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. AmeriCorps members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Members gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the members and the communities they serve.

AMERICORPS ENCOURAGED ACTIVITIES

- Registration to Vote: MCC encourages all eligible participants to register and vote. Participants who are unable to vote before or after service hours should be allowed to do so during their service time without incurring any penalties.
- Jury Duty: Participants are allowed to serve on a jury without being penalized for doing so. During the time participants serve as jurors, they should continue to receive credit for their normal service hours, a living allowance, health care, and if applicable, child care coverage.
- Armed Force Reserves: Participants may participate in the Reserves of the US Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard. Reservists are required to serve one weekend a month plus 12-15 days a year. Participants may be granted a leave of absence to complete Reserve obligations. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves. MCC will credit participants for AmeriCorps service hours during their two weeks of active duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps term of service. The participant would receive credit for the number of hours they would have served during that period had there been no interruption.

AMERICORPS PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

There are certain activities that AmeriCorps members may not perform in the course of their duties, while charging time to the AmeriCorps program, or at the request of program staff. Furthermore, members may not engage in any conduct in a manner that would associate the national service program or the Corporation with the prohibited activities. Please become familiar with the specific prohibitions to ensure compliance with these important guidelines.

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

- Attempting to influence legislation;
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- Providing a direct benefit to—
 - A business organized for profit;
 - A labor union;
 - A partisan political organization;
 - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to

prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative
An organization engaged in the religious activities described in B.7. above unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities

- Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.
 - c) Nonduplication and Nondisplacement. CNCS assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program or conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides. Members may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of the member.
 - d) The member may not spend more than ten percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust, performing fundraising activities, as described in CFR §2520.40.
- Use of hand-held, portable electronic devices while driving is prohibited

However, AmeriCorps members, like all private citizens, may participate in religious activities, fundraising, lobbying, political, or advocacy activities as long as it is done on their own time, at their own expense, and at their own initiative. Members may not wear AmeriCorps service gear in such instances.

E. DRUG FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

MCC is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment and to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all employees, participants and other individuals in our workplace in accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988. This commitment is jeopardized when any MCC employee or participant engages in use, possession, trade and/or sale of illegal drugs, intoxicants, controlled substances, or abuses prescription drugs or alcohol. Medical marijuana is considered a controlled substance by MCC. According to the Medical Marijuana Act, "Employees are not required to accommodate the medical use of marijuana in the workplace."

Each situation will be handled through the MCC Disciplinary Action process. **Fellows / Supervisors must immediately report any violation or suspicion of violation of MCC's General Code of Conduct and/or Drug Free Workplace policies to MCC Staff.**

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

MCC recognizes that alcohol abuse and drug use pose a significant threat to our goals. We have established a drug-free workplace program that balances our respect for individuals with the need to maintain an alcohol and drug-free environment. Therefore, MCC has established the following policy:

- It is a violation of MCC policy for any participant to use, possess, trade and/or offer for sale illegal drugs, intoxicants, medical marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- It is a violation of MCC policy to report to work under the influence of alcohol or medical marijuana, or to possess or use alcohol or medical marijuana anytime a participant is representing MCC. (This includes while on or using MCC property, traveling to and from the worksite, at the worksite, in any MCC spike camp, on volunteer projects, serving volunteer hours, attending public meetings or at any MCC participant gathering or training.) This policy applies to partners, volunteers and visitors to MCC worksites or spike camps. If non-MCC persons violate this policy while in an MCC camp, they should be informed of our policy and asked to leave.
- It is a violation of MCC policy for anyone to use prescription drugs illegally. It is the responsibility of the participant to report the use of prescribed drugs that may affect the participant's judgment, performance, or behavior to their supervisor. Neither prescription nor non-prescription drugs may be shared.
- Anyone involved in working or volunteering with Montana Conservation Corps who is caught violating these policies or subject to reasonable suspicion due to **compelling evidence or credible testimony** will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination from the program and/or

satisfactory completion of a drug abuse counseling or rehabilitation program.

- Employees and participants must notify MCC of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.
- MCC participants may be subject to drug testing at any time, especially if suspected of violating MCC's Drug Free Workplace policies.

MCC's Drug Free Workplace policy is intended to comply with all federal and state laws and is designed to safeguard employee privacy rights to the fullest extent of the law. Additional information is available through the MCC State Office.

TOBACCO USAGE

- Smoking is only permitted in authorized locations. Fellows/Supervisors should designate a smoking area for each work site and camp.
- Smoking is only permitted during designated times; before and after work and during scheduled breaks or lunch. Smoking is not permitted during work time.
- It should be assumed that smoking is not permitted unless otherwise designated rather than assumed smoking is acceptable any place at any time.
- Smokeless tobacco use is not formally restricted but users should make every effort to present themselves in a professional manner and be considerate of others and the environment when disposing of tobacco by-products.
- Special consideration should be given when field crews or Fellows are working and camping alongside youth crews. Individuals working with MCC youth crews are to abstain from using tobacco products while they are working or camping with that youth crew. Under no circumstances should corps members provide tobacco products or condone tobacco use by youth.

F. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has defined sexual harassment as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

As mentioned above, there are two basic types of unlawful sexual harassment. The first type involves harassment that results in a tangible employment action. The second type of unlawful sexual harassment is referred to as hostile environment. Behaviors that can contribute to a hostile environment include discussing sexual activities, telling off-color jokes, unnecessary touching, displaying sexually suggestive pictures, commenting on physical attributes, or using demeaning or inappropriate terms.

According to the law, virtually any sexually oriented language, conduct, or behavior can be viewed as sexual harassment if it is unwelcomed. It is the impact of the conduct or behavior on the recipient (or on observers), not the intent of the harasser, which determines sexual harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PARTICIPANT POLICY

- Sexual harassment in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable conduct and will be dealt with through MCC's Disciplinary Action Procedures.

- Sexual harassment will not be tolerated by anyone involved, working, or volunteering with MCC, whether it is directed at a co-worker or at anyone in the public at large.
- Any participant or employee engaged in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action including demotion or termination.
- Staff and participants are subject to disciplinary action if they tolerate sexual harassment, or retaliate against participants or employees who report or file complaints of sexual harassment.

REPORTING PROCEDURE AND OPTIONS

MCC encourages anyone who has been a victim of harassment or sexual misconduct at the work place or during MCC sponsored events (e.g. – training, projects, and professional development opportunities) to immediately report the harassment to their supervisor. Reports may be made in writing or orally.

- Directly contact your supervisor, if you feel comfortable
- Directly contact the Director of Individual Placement Programs; Bryan Wilson
- Directly contact Director of Programs; Kate O’Neill
- Submit a complaint through MCC’s anonymous reporting option via www.mtcorps.org/contact-us

Additional resources for reporting or receiving direct, confidential services are located in the final pages of this manual.

MCC will investigate all complaints of harassment thoroughly, to the fullest extent practicable. MCC will keep complaints and the terms of their resolution confidential. However, MCC cannot guarantee complete confidentiality in the process of completing a thorough investigation. Relevant information to provide will include the day(s)/date(s) of occurrence(s), location(s) of occurrence(s), names of individuals involved and names of witnesses, if any.

If a participant utilizes any of the first four reporting options above and still feels that their report has not been addressed, they should then contact the Montana Human Rights Bureau at 1-800-542-0887. www.erd.dli.mt.gov/human-rights

G. MCC COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

A work environment that is truly diverse draws upon and respects the unique characteristics, skills and experiences of all employees, members, and youth who participate in MCC’s programs. Diversity encompasses individual attributes such as:

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| • Gender | • Age | • Disability |
| • Race | • Sexual Orientation | • Thinking styles |
| • Ethnicity | • Gender Identity | • Opinions |
| • Ancestry | • Religion | • Life experiences |
| • Language | • Socio-economic status | |

MCC believes that by embracing a wide array of perspectives, the organization becomes more creative, flexible and productive. MCC values diversity at all levels in the organization as it enriches the decisions and programs by providing a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and abilities. Diversity is the lifeblood of an MCC experience; it increases the capacity to dream and serve.

Diversity benefits individuals within the agency and MCC as a whole. It is recognized that each employee, member and youth brings unique capabilities, experiences and characteristics to the workplace. MCC strives to provide a supportive and inclusive work environment in which everyone is treated fairly and respectfully, has equal access to opportunities and resources and can contribute to the organization’s success. MCC is committed to fostering understanding, communication and respect among all people within the organization.

MCC’s commitment to diversity extends beyond the organization to its communities and environment. An increasingly diverse society requires an increasingly diverse workforce of corps graduates with skills and values to be leaders and community builders in this changing world. A lack of varied voices is particularly acute in the areas

of land management and conservation where many of the jobs and practices reflect the values and traditions of a single culture. The cultivation and inclusion of diverse perspectives will be essential in developing responses and solutions in the future. Similarly, engaging citizens from diverse backgrounds will be vital in developing the next generation of environmental workers.

H. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

MCC seeks to provide access and opportunity to a diverse group of participants, while continuing to identify and reduce barriers to being involved in our organization and programs. Equal Employment Opportunity has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental principle at MCC, where employment is based upon personal capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, sex, physical or mental disability, marital status, genetic information, political beliefs, or any other protected characteristic as established by law.

This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment and hiring, compensation, benefits, layoff, discharge, training, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. If you require specialized accommodations (due to a disability, religious belief/practice, etc.) either for your current job or for jobs to which you would like to apply, contact your supervisor. It is important that you notify us of your need for an accommodation. Once that is done, we will work with you through an interactive process to evaluate and if possible, arrange for a reasonable accommodation.

Employees with access to information about reasonable accommodations shall maintain the confidentiality of the information to the extent reasonably possible and shall not release the information to anyone who does not have the right or need to know.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

MCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, creed, physical or mental disabilities, color, or any other individuality protected by the law.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Materials may be provided in alternate formats. The accommodation must be essential for the member to perform their service successfully. Funds for reasonable accommodations are available for use by member with disabilities, which have been offered a position with AmeriCorps, and require an accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of their service. In the event you encounter the need to request a reasonable accommodation, please communicate with your site supervisor and the MCC Program Manager.

I. INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Conservation Fellows must pass checks from the National Sexual Offender Public Registry (NSOPR), Montana State Repository, and a fingerprint based FBI check. *On April 21, 2011, the two-part National Service Criminal History check became a three-part check requirement for individuals serving in, or working for, a program or project that allows for recurring access to a vulnerable population. Once new regulations are established, newly enrolled or hired individuals in predictable contact with children (17 and younger), senior citizens (60 and older), and individuals with disabilities must undergo:*

- 1. A National Sex Offender Public Registry check (NSOPR);*
- 2. A statewide criminal history repository check of the state of residency and the state where the Individual will work/serve (FBI checks do not substitute for state checks); and,*
- 3. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history repository check.*

In order for MCC to be compliant with these laws, all grant covered individuals engaged after April 21, 2011 who have recurring access to vulnerable populations **must** consent to and pass criminal background checks on the NSOPR, the Montana State Repository *and* a fingerprint based FBI check. For MCC this includes site supervisors and members. *An individual's ability to serve as a CI is subject to review of criminal history and fingerprint based FBI checks.*

MCC can facilitate checks in the National Sexual Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) and in the Montana State Repository. MCC will complete those two checks at no cost to the applicant or site supervisor. The results of the checks will be housed in the MCC state office.

INITIATING THE FBI CHECK

Applicants will need to:

- Obtain their own fingerprints- prints must be less than a year old on original cards
- Keep a copy of the fingerprinting receipt
- Sign and date the Non-Criminal Justice Applicant Rights signature page
- **Submit original copies** of prints, signature page, and receipts to MCC.

Aimee Severson
Montana Conservation Corps
206 N. Grand Ave
Bozeman, MT 59715

MCC will submit the check to the FBI.

FINGERPRINTING

- FBI background checks require fingerprints. Everyone will need to contact their local police department for specific details on fingerprinting in their county. Here is a link to help locate your local police department: <http://www.usacops.com/>
- Most places only do fingerprinting on specific days/times, and often require appointments. Make sure to plan ahead!

REIMBURSEMENT

MCC will reimburse the fingerprinting cost within 30 days of the start date.

- Send MCC a copy of detailed receipt for fingerprinting

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROCEDURES

FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR MCC MEMBERS CAN ONLY BE TAKEN BY MCC STAFF.

Following policies and procedures is an essential quality of any successful MCC experience. In order to emphasize the importance of these policies, MCC encourages utilizing the Disciplinary Action Procedures as a way to enforce and educate corps members on MCC policy. Disciplinary action does not indicate that one has failed or is bad. It is a tool to manage behavior and foster a healthy, safe environment. MCC strives to create a culture where people can be given a chance to correct their actions and succeed.

The disciplinary action procedures are intended to be used as a progressive process. However, at any time MCC staff may elect to accelerate the process and skip levels based on the severity of the behavior or on repeated infractions. It is important to note that if a member is released for Cause they will not receive an education award or any interest paid by the Corporation on loan forbearance. Disciplinary action procedures may be initiated by Regional staff or Program staff. However, only the Director of Programs and/or President and CEO has the authority to fully terminate a corps member.

At times, short-term suspensions may be enacted in order to allow staff time to gather information to better understand the complexities of the situation that merits discipline, staff may also levy a fine as part of the disciplinary procedure.

In the event that disciplinary action needs to be taken, the general procedure followed is:

Level One: Verbal Warning: Although it is a verbal warning, it needs to be documented. Partners or host supervisors may utilize verbal warnings but must make MCC aware of the action as soon as possible.

Level Two: Written Warning: MCC staff fills out a Disciplinary Action Form with a copy given to the member. It will include changes or corrections that need to be made in the member's behavior or performance, as well as the consequences that will be taken if the behavior is not modified within the given time frame. A fine may be issued along with the written reprimand if appropriate.

Level Three: Suspension: A corps member is subject to suspension where there is reason to suspect a violation of MCC policy, illegal activity, or other inappropriate behavior. A corps member on suspension will be provided notification in writing that they are to leave work and not to report to work until instructed to do so. All suspensions are with pay and result in either full reinstatement or termination. Staff will fill out a Disciplinary Action Form and a Payroll Change Form, and submit both to the state office. All suspensions must be approved by the Director of Programs and/or President/CEO.

Level Four: Termination: If termination is recommended, documentation must be sent to the state office. Only the Director of Programs and/or President/CEO can approve termination.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR MEMBERS

It is MCC practice to deal promptly and fairly with member complaints and the staff takes this practice very seriously. MCC has developed a conflict resolution procedure to help members resolve concerns about unfair treatment, discrimination, or dissatisfaction with factors related to work. Concerns may include, but are not limited to: job assignments, performance evaluations, supervision, disciplinary actions, suspensions, and terminations.

B. TERMINATION

LEAVING FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

AmeriCorps recognizes that due to unforeseen circumstances, some members may not be able to complete their required hours of service within the program period. The following guidelines should be applied to these members. If a member elects to leave the program, the MCC Manager and MCC Senior Staff have the authority to determine whether or not their reason for dropping out is a "compelling personal circumstance." If a decision is made that the member's reason does indeed constitute compelling circumstances, the member may receive a pro-rated educational award or temporarily be suspended from service for up to two years.

While this is ultimately the decision of MCC Staff, you should be aware of the general guidelines in this situation. Some examples of reasons that may justify release from service include a member's critical illness, a serious family matter, or death or critical illness in the member's immediate family. It may also include premature termination of the program or other programmatic problems beyond the member's control.

If a member chooses to terminate their participation to return to school, take a job, or because they are dissatisfied with their assignment, these reasons would not justify a release for compelling circumstances. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a member leaves due to a compelling and personal circumstance, they are still required to fill out the AmeriCorps exit paperwork.

TERMINATION FOR CAUSE

Only the MCC Director of Programs or President/CEO may terminate a member from their service position. AmeriCorps programs are required to release a member for cause if they, among other things, drop out without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances or are convicted of a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance during the term of service.

A service site must promptly communicate any performance, behavior, or service related concerns to MCC Staff. In the event that an issue arises, the Site Supervisor, MCC Staff, and if necessary MCC Senior Staff; will decide upon the appropriate course of action when dealing with disciplinary issues. All performance issues must be **well-documented** by the site and the MCC State Office.

If a member is released for cause, they will not receive any part of an education award and may be disqualified from future service through AmeriCorps.

C. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

In the event that informal efforts and conflict resolution to resolve disputes are unsuccessful, AmeriCorps members and other interested individuals, such as Project Sponsors or Host Site Supervisors, may seek resolution through the following grievance procedures. These procedures are intended to apply to service-related issues, such as job assignments, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, suspension, or release for cause. In addition, individuals who are not selected as AmeriCorps members or labor unions alleging displacement of employees or duplication of activities by AmeriCorps may utilize these procedures.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is available, but must be selected within 45 days of the underlying dispute. If a member or interested party chooses ADR as a first option, a neutral party designated by the MCC will attempt to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution. The neutral party must not have participated in any previous decisions concerning the issue in dispute. ADR is confidential, non-binding, and informal. No communications or proceedings of ADR may be referred to at the grievance hearing or arbitration stages. The neutral party may not participate in subsequent proceedings.

If ADR is chosen by the member or interested party, the deadlines for convening a hearing and for a hearing decision are 30 and 60 days respectively. They are held in abeyance until the conclusion of ADR. At the initial session of ADR, the neutral party must provide written notice to the aggrieved party of his or her right to request a hearing. If ADR does not resolve the matter within 30 calendar days, the neutral party must again notify the aggrieved party of his or her right to request a hearing. At any time, the aggrieved party may decline ADR and proceed directly to the hearing process.

GRIEVANCE HEARING

A member or interested party may request a grievance hearing without participating in ADR, or if ADR is selected and it fails to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution. The member should make a written request for a hearing to the MCC President/CEO. A request for a hearing must be made within one year after the date of the alleged occurrence. At the time a request for a hearing is made, MCC shall make available to the member or interested party information that it relied upon in its disciplinary decision.

MCC will arrange for one or more pre-hearing conferences at a time mutually convenient to the parties. Pre-hearing conferences are not a substitute for a hearing. They are intended to facilitate a mutually agreeable resolution of the matter to make a hearing unnecessary or to narrow the issues to be decided at the hearing. The format of the pre-hearing conference may be flexible, involving meetings with one party at a time and/or with both parties together. Pre-hearing conferences may be conducted by the Director of Programs, Director of Operations, or the President/CEO.

The hearing will be conducted by the Director of Programs, Director of Operations, or the President/CEO. The person conducting the hearing may not have participated in any previous decisions concerning the issue in dispute. A hearing must be held no later than 30 calendar days after the filing of the grievance, and a written decision must be made no later than 60 calendar days after filing.

BINDING ARBITRATION

An aggrieved party may request binding arbitration if a grievance hearing decision is adverse or if no decision is made within 60 days of the filing of the grievance. The arbitrator must be independent and selected by an agreement of the parties. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service will appoint one within 15 calendar days after receiving a request from one of the parties.

An arbitration proceeding will be held no later than 45 calendar days after the request for arbitration, or no later than 30 calendar days after the appointment of an arbitrator by the Corporation's CEO. An arbitration decision will be made no later than 30 calendar days after the commencement of the arbitration proceeding.

The cost of arbitration will be divided evenly between the parties, unless the aggrieved party prevails, in which case MCC will pay the total cost of the proceeding as well as the prevailing party's attorneys' fees.

REMEDIES

Remedies for grievances include, but are not limited to, reinstatement in good standing of a member wrongfully suspended or dismissed, and prohibition of a placement of a member. If reinstatement of the member results in the member not being able to fully complete their hours within the term of service, arrangements may be made to allow the member to complete the hours.

D. PROCEDURES FOR WORK-RELATED INJURIES

A work-related injury is any injury that results from activities performed within MCC's program parameters. This includes injuries sustained during work, even if the injury was caused by unsafe behavior on the part of the injured person. If the injury or illness is or may be work related, then file a Worker's Compensation claim. State Fund will then determine the validity of the claim and accept or deny it based on Montana's Workers Compensation law.

After an injury occurs, one of our main priorities after having the injury treated will be to get that participant back to work in any capacity, as soon as possible. If the participant can no longer perform standard duties, modified duties will be created to accommodate their abilities for a limited time. The Physician's Medical Release form must be completed and signed by the examining physician, so that we have documentation of the participant's physical limitations and abilities. Follow up on all directions the physician gives, i.e.: secondary visit, prescriptions.

PAPERWORK REQUIRED FOR WORK-RELATED INJURIES

- MCC Incident Report form.
- State Fund Workers Compensation First Report from regional office or www.montanastatefund.com , signed by regional staff.
- Physician Medical Release. These forms need to be filled out by the attending physician, if the injury will limit the capacity of the participant to work. If there is any question, have the doctor fill out the form.

Return these forms to the MCC office as soon as possible.

NOTE: For out of state worksite injuries in Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota or South Dakota, make sure you explain to the hospital or clinic personnel that we are a Montana based organization and that Montana State Fund is our insurance carrier. These states may have different procedures and forms for Workers Compensation. Make sure you have copies of everything you turn in, and be diligent in explaining who and what MCC is.

WORK-RELATED INJURY CHECKLIST

Following a work-related injury, make sure you have:

- Called your host site supervisor and the MCC office
- Completed Workers Compensation forms
- Have physician complete the Physician's Medical Release, if necessary
- Completed MCC Incident Report
- Obtained prescriptions; managed other follow-up needs
- Made follow-up call to the office
- Debriefed with MCC staff
- Entered into a Return To Work Agreement, if necessary

III. TIMESHEETS AND OTHER REPORTS

A. VERIFYING AND RECORDING HOURS

Conservation Fellows (CI) are responsible for maintaining a record of service hours utilizing MCC timesheets. This is an extremely important function because eligibility for the education award and interest payments is contingent upon proof of completion of service hours. CIs should regularly work a standard 40 hour week based on the normal

hours of operation for your organization; however when the situation warrants due to field days, service projects, travel, etc. additional hours and days are acceptable. **Members may also take all holidays observed by your organization; however they may not count hours for those days! ONLY record hours for time actually served!**

TIMESHEET REQUIREMENTS:

- All timesheets must be completed in pen (blue/black) or electronically
- Timesheets may not contain whiteout! All errors/changes must be crossed out with a single line and initialed.
- All timesheets must include dates of service and indicate when lunch was taken.
- All timesheets must include original signatures from both the member and designated site supervisor. **Signature dates must be *after* the last day hours were recorded on the timesheet.**
- Hours must be entered in a decimal format and rounded to the nearest half (.50)
- Keep copies of timesheets in your office and also send them into the MCC State Office.

Timesheet Description of Activities: Timesheets must include a description of activities. Allowable descriptions will be sent to the member.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It is essential that members fulfill all reporting requirements in a timely and professional manner. These requirements may be in the form of organizational documents such as biweekly paperwork, field reports, timesheets, and evaluations.

FIELD REPORTS

These documents are completed by each individual member and will include a daily or weekly log of project accomplishments, site dynamics and safety discussions. They also include a Hazard Assessment page, which is used to complete the included Risk Mitigation page. This report helps us track the educational components completed in the field, which are led by either our members or our project partners.

C. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A mid-term and an end-of-term performance evaluation are required for all AmeriCorps members completing a term of service with Montana Conservation Corps. MCC is a leadership development program with a focus on both technical and fundamental skills that empower our participants to leave our program with the skills and values to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities. Supervisors will be asked to complete both a mid-season and end of season evaluation for their member. Evaluations must be completed on the MCC evaluation form, and signed by both the supervisor and the member and then reviewed and approved by MCC staff.

IV. HOST SITE

A. UNIFORM POLICY

MCC will provide uniform shirts and hats for the Conservation Fellows. Fellows are to wear the approved uniform anytime they are counting hours towards their service term. Uniforms comply with required Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) guidelines but also demonstrate collaboration between host site agency/organization and Montana Conservation Corps.

- Uniforms must be worn whenever the member is traveling to and from the worksite, while they are on the worksite, participating in educational programs or other MCC functions or officially representing MCC at meetings or other events.
- All clothes should be in good condition. If taken care of, these uniforms should last through the summer.
- During a project or work, the MCC uniform must be worn at all times.
- Deviations may only be made due to safety/practical concerns. Defacing a MCC uniform may result in a fine, and/or requirement to replace a particular article. Example of uniform defacing include cutting off shirt sleeves or neck line, inappropriate patches, drawing inappropriate words or pictures on clothing, adding stickers to hard hats.

- Wearing MCC and AmeriCorps uniform articles in establishments whose primary focus is the serving of alcohol is prohibited.

Approved uniform items include:

- Collared, button-down, work shirt with MCC and AmeriCorps logos. (At its own cost, the host site may add its logo and/or a nametag with host-site names/logo to the front pocket.)
- Green MCC t-shirt and standard AmeriCorps grey t-shirt (member can wear nametag with host site name/logo.)
- MCC hat

Host sites may provide additional host site branded items, such as hats and vests, so long as they don't detract from the Fellow's affiliation as a Montana Conservation Corps AmeriCorps member.

B. WORK SITE POLICIES

- Conservation Fellows must adhere to all AmeriCorps, MCC and host site policies and procedures and always work in a safe manner.
- Should discrepancies arise among MCC and host site policies, the Conservation Fellow should contact MCC Staff immediately.

SECTION 3: PHONE NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

A. MCC EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Please call in the order listed below until you reach an MCC staff.

MCC State Office:

Office: (406) 587-4475

1. Angela Davis - Program Manager

Ext. 102 Cell: (406) 390-1248

2. Bryan Wilson - Director of Individual Placement Programs

Ext. 107 Cell: (330) 242-4482

3. Mitch Lassa – Program Coordinator

Ext. 105 Cell: (715) 551-7791

3. Kate O’Neill - Director of Programs

Ext. 223 Cell: (802) 952-8445

4. Jono McKinney - President & CEO

Ext. 103 Cell: (406) 600-0067

If you cannot reach anyone at the state office, please contact the region closest to you.

Greater Yellowstone, Bozeman

Office: (406)-586-0151

On call: (406) 404-4265

Northern Rockies, Kalispell

Office: (406) 755-3619

On call: (406) 253-8102

Central Divide, Helena

Office: (406) 495-9214

On call: (406) 202-8600

Western Wildlands, Missoula

Office: (406) 728-2720

On call: (406) 370-2851

B. OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Highway Patrol Numbers

Montana (406) 841-7000

Wyoming (307) 442-9090

(800) 777-4321

North Dakota (701) 328-9921

South Dakota (605) 393-8121

Idaho (208) 884-7200

State Fund Worker’s Compensation 1-800-332-6102

Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance

1-844-559-8336 ext 7064

Vehicle Insurance Policy# (PHPK1321511)

Poison Control Center 1-800-525-5042

C. NATIONAL AND LOCAL REPORTING AND SUPPORT HOTLINES

Crisis Text Line

text “HOME” to 741741

Suicide Hotline

1-800-784-2433

1-800-273-8255

Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233

Sexual Assault Hotline

1-800-656-4673

Reporting Child Abuse

1-866-820-5473 (MT)

1-800-422-4453 (Natn’l)

WY reports by county

Call 911 if danger is imminent.

COALITIONS AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING, DIRECT SERVICES)

BILLINGS, MT

YWCA Billings – Gateway

Office: (406) 245-4472

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 245-4472

Text Help Line (406) 702-0229

BOZEMAN, MT

HAVEN

Office: (406) 586-7689

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 586-4111

GREAT FALLS, MT

Mercy Home

Office: (406) 452-1315

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 453-1018

HELENA, MT

Friendship Center

Office: (406) 442-6800

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 459-3254

KALISPELL, MT

The Abbie Shelter

Office: (406) 752-4735

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 752-7273

MISSOULA, MT

YWCA of Missoula

Office: (406) 543-6691

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 542-1944

NEZ PERCE COUNTY, ID

YWCA

Office: (208) 746-9655

24-Hour Crisis Line: (800) 669-3176

RAPID CITY, SD

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response

24-Hour Crisis Line: (605) 737-6294

MALTA, MT

Phillips County Domestic Violence Program

Office: (406) 654-2442

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 654-1100

MILES CITY, MT

Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault

Office: (406) 234-0542

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 951-0475

CROW AGENCY, MT

Crow Victims Assistance Program

Office: (406) 638-3924

BROWNING, MT

Montana Legal Services Association

Office: (800) 866-6899

BUTTE, MT

Safe Space, Inc.

Office: (406) 782-9807

24-Hour Crisis Line: (406) 782-8511

CHEYENNE, WY

Wyoming Safe House

Office: (307) 634-4220

24-Hour Crisis Line: (307) 637-7233