MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS
Tools for Living. Experience for Life.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps Crew Leader Overview and FAQ

Montana Conservation Corps has a variety of different Crew Leader (CL) positions each year and it is important to note that these positions are all unique! For more specific details on your specific program and position, please reference your regional specific FAQ or speak with your regional staff.



LIVING STIPEND

The living stipend for Crew Leaders is $1,360 biweekly ($2,720/month). It is taxed! The amount you're taxed will vary based on your home state and the withholdings selected on you W-4. Your living stipend will be deposited into your account every two weeks and will follow MCC's pay period schedule. The living stipend is meant to cover your basic needs during your term of service, and is different than an hourly wage.

EDUCATION AWARD

The amount of your Education Award is determined by the length of your term of service. Crew Leaders serving through October will receive an education award in the amount of $5,176.50. Crew Leaders serving through mid-August will receive the amount of $3,697.50. Your Ed Award is distributed through AmeriCorps via your AmeriCorps portal, not through MCC, and can take 6-8 weeks to be available after your term of service. In order to receive your Ed Award, you must complete your service hours and serve through the final day of your service contract. More Info on Education Award. Learn more here about Loan forbearance for QUALIFIED student loans while in a term of service.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health Insurance is available for all Crew Leaders, is provided at NO COST, and is available on your first day of service, though your insurance cards will come later. MCC Health Insurance ends on the last day of the month of the last month you served. For example, if you finish your term of service on August 9th, you will be insured through August 31st. If you finish your term of service on October 25th, you will be insured through October 31st. You are covered by Workers Compensation while on projects. All participants will be enrolled in the AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program, which provides FREE 24/7 behavioral health resources, in addition to financial planning, legal assistance, and life coaching!

DRIVING MCC VEHICLES

Leaders are expected to drive MCC vehicles to transport crews and gear to and from project sites. In order to drive an MCC vehicle you must:

- Be 21 years of age
- Cannot have more than 2 moving violations or accidents within the past three years (including cellphone violations)
- Cannot have any major violations within the past five years
- Cannot have any history of a DWI/DUI/OWI/OUI



You must also go through MCC's driver training and road test. Driving safety will be taken seriously and your ability to drive an MCC vehicle can be revoked at any time.

FOOD

When on hitch participants are allotted $10/day for food. Staff will deposit each participant's money onto a debit card that CLs will receive. You will work together as a crew to meal plan, coordinate food shopping, and cook and share meals together on hitch. Dietary restrictions can be accommodated. Some participants will qualify for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, though this is not guaranteed.



Participants will receive a letter during the onboarding phase with detailed instructions. Many of our local farmer's markets accept SNAP!

FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS

MCC Crew Leaders are required to possess a Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA) and CPR Certification or higher. If you have a current certification that will remain current through the end of your term, MCC will need a copy of this certification. If you do not have a current certification MCC schedules a WAFA Training with Aerie Backcountry Medicine the week prior to your official start date. If you choose to take a class prior to this MCC will reimburse for the cost equivalent of the WAFA training that we will be providing. We cannot cover the full cost of an EMT or WFR training. Reimbursements of any kind cannot occur until your first paycheck.

VACATION DAYS

ONLY Crew Leaders who start in February and serve through October are eligible for vacations days.
If you are a Crew Leader serving from February - August, you are not eligible for vacation days. Vacation day allotment is based on the length of your term of service.

Crew Leaders serving a 1200-hour term are eligible for up to 5 vacation days that should be used consecutively/all at once. These days off do not accrue, are not paid out if unused, and must be used prior to the last week of your term of service. You will need to submit a time off request form to staff who will decide if your request is approved.

There are certain times of the season where we do not allow vacation requests:

- Spring Leader Training
- Corps Member Training
- Your crew's first hitch
- End of Season weeks

You cannot take off at the same time as your co-leader (if you have one), and only two leaders, across all programs, can take time off during the same hitch. If you have a special circumstance that you know will conflict with these guidelines or your term of service please speak with your Program Manager immediately to determine if accommodations can be made.



VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is at the heart of our mission as an organization. As such, our participants are required to volunteer locally during their term of service, separate of their project work. As Crew Leaders you are responsible for completing two volunteer events during your time with MCC.

HOUSING

While housing is not provided during your term of service, MCC does have a number of regional housing opportunities you may want to consider when selecting regional preference. When on hitch (serving on projects in the field), you will have a campsite available.

Most of our Crew Leaders opt to secure rental housing during their term, either individually or in small groups. As folks are hired, MCC Staff will share your contact information so that you may reach out to other CL's who are also looking to secure housing and work together to make the process easier and more affordable.

Other Crew Leaders choose to live out of their vehicles for the season, though this is not necessarily encouraged as it can be difficult, burdensome, and cold in the shoulder seasons. The season is long and it can be draining to camp on both work time and in your off-time. Montana is a popular destination for tourists and oftentimes, especially in the summer, local campsites can be difficult to come by. If choosing to camp, you may need to drive further out of town to find a suitable location. You can learn more about regional housing options here.



UNIFORMS AND GEAR

All MCC participants are required to wear the MCC uniform while completing service hours. MCC provides uniform shirts and you will need to provide work boots and work pants. There is a gear list online but **it is recommended that you speak with staff once you are hired to determine what you need to have for your unique crew type**. Rental gear is available for Crew Leaders during LDP, and ProDeals will also be available once you have begun your term of service with MCC.



MCC is a Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace and possession or use of any illegal substances while on hitch is against policy. According to the Medical Marijuana Act, "Employers are not required to accommodate the medical use of marijuana in the workplace," and thus it is against policy to use or possess while on hitch or while on the clock with MCC.

CREW TYPES

We have four program/crew types in MCC:

- Field Crews
- Forestry Crews
- Field and Fuels Crews
- Wildland Restoration Teams



Field, Forestry and Fuels crews are six people in size, with two Crew Leaders and four Crew Members, while Wildland Restoration Crews are four people in size, with one Crew Leader and three Crew Members. Some crews could also be solo led with an Assistant Crew Leader.

For field crews, members have three different options of term length/time:

- Summer-Only crew members start in May and end in August
- Full-Term Crew members start in May and end in October
- Fall Crew Members who start in August and end in October

As a Crew Leader with MCC, you may have 2 crews during the season (one for the summer, then another for the fall).

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (LDP)

Spring Training is comprised of both training and projects, and is designed to provide you with the basic foundations in leadership and technical skills that will help you learn to lead your crews. Participants are often surprised by how heavily we emphasize the interpersonal skills, like self-awareness, communication, feedback, emotional intelligence and behavioral health. While you will spend most of your time in the woods doing hard conservation service, the most difficult aspect of your role will actually be serving with and leading others, so that is where we put a lot of our focus.

However, we will not have time to train you on every type of project or scenario that you will experience throughout your season, but we will provide you with the foundations needed to problem solve and critically assess situations. Another surprise for CLs during LDP is how much time we spend training indoors in the spring. Prepare for some classroom time early on!

Learn more about MCC's LDP!



SPRING LEADER TRAINING SCHEDULE

The most important thing to remember about the schedule is that it is always changing. Our service is incredibly dynamic- we serve with different partners, serve outside and are easily impacted by weather, snow melt and wildfire smoke, and we have 70+ Crew Leaders and Crew Members who get sick, injured and have emergencies to tend to. You will find out your project locations 1 month in advance, and we will not know your full schedule for the year upon arrival. Flexibility and patience will be key. Your schedule during spring will look much different and far more varied than when your crew members arrive. During the spring there will be some weeks when you are in the office 8-5pm Monday through Friday, some weeks when you'll be camped out for 1-5 days, and also times when you go out on 9/10-day hitches.

Schedules will vary based on position and program type. Not every Crew Leader will receive the same trainings, but the foundations will be consistent. The training you receive will be dependent upon the type of crew you are leading - not every CL will be trained in chainsaw use, felling trees, crosscut use, building trails, or applying herbicide.

FIELD SEASON

The field season starts once crew members arrive and after they have completed their 5-day orientation to MCC. Our focus shifts completely from training to project completion. After orientation ends project hitches will begin and you will get into the routine of going on hitches consistently. You will know your project hitch schedule in advance, but locations and project details will change as they get closer.

FIELD SEASON SCHEDULE

Schedules will also vary based on position type. While we try to ensure all crews have the same weekends off, different regions do have different crew schedules. Crews can work 4 days on/3 days off, 5 days on/2 days off, 8 days on/6 days off, or 9 days on/5 days off. That said, as with any field-based position, grocery shopping for your crew for hitch is something that will not happen on work time. **YOU WILL HAVE TO GROCERY SHOP FOR HITCH DURING YOUR OFF TIME**. This is standard for all Forest Service and Park Service employees as well. Generally, crews rotate through shopping responsibilities so that not every member on the crew has to do that each week.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT MCC:

A day in the life of each type of crew

A Day in the Life - Video

Learn More About the Adult Conservation Crew Program

Frequently Asked Questions

You'll Find Community - Video

Why Should You Join MCC? - Video

Learn more about the benefits of a term of service with MCC

Learn more about the support MCC provides

Preparing for your term of service

