



Commonwealth Corps Service Internship Position Description



Regional Environmental Council Inc.
School Gardens

Commonwealth Corps School Gardens Specialist 2024-2025

The mission of the Commonwealth Corps service internship program is to engage Massachusetts residents of all ages, backgrounds, and identities in direct service to strengthen communities, address critical needs, and increase volunteerism. Through hands-on experience, Commonwealth Corps members gain professional skills and valuable knowledge while positively impacting diverse communities in our state.

The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) is a private, nonprofit agency that oversees the program and supports host site partners and members to find success throughout the program year. The REC is seeking two Commonwealth Corps members, each to serve 10 months in a half-time capacity. One will serve as the Farm and Garden Specialist, the other as the School Gardens Specialist. They will join a diverse corps of members across Massachusetts who share a common desire to discover their passion and build their network in service to their communities and the Commonwealth.

The Regional Environmental Council, Inc. (REC) is a grassroots, nonprofit, environmental and food justice organization with a 50-year history working for environmental sustainability and social justice in Central Massachusetts. REC is seeking two half-time Commonwealth Corps members to support developing and implementing farm to early childhood programming at daycare and early childhood centers throughout Worcester as well as providing broad support to the 34 school gardens supported by REC. In addition, they will collaborate with other members to leverage 100+ volunteers that will be engaged in hands-on garden support and maintenance and urban food production for food insecure neighborhoods.

What You'll Do:

Essential Responsibilities:

- Complete a minimum of 750 hours of service, serving through June 21, 2025.
- Attend a minimum of 6 Commonwealth Corps trainings and service events held by MSA post orientation.
- Participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of MSA-related activities each week. This may include filling out timesheets, completing a bi-monthly reflection or check-in, or other MSA-related tasks or activities.
- Recruit and support volunteers to assist in the construction of new raised bed gardens at daycare and early childhood centers.
- Provide direct support to gardens serving early childhood age, including general maintenance, watering, and harvesting as well as developing plans in partnership with the site for sustainable long-term maintenance.
- Develop and deliver developmentally appropriate hands-on workshops related to gardening and healthy eating.
- Work with School Gardens Coordinator to schedule and implement REC's "mini market" program where REC brings Mobile Market van and produce for an on-site market experience for children, including a literacy component and take-home vegetables for families.
- Develop support tools and training for early childhood providers to incorporate gardening as a teaching tool.
- Support members of the YouthGROW program (REC's youth development program) to provide programming and support at K-12 School Garden sites.

Marginal Responsibilities:

Collaborate with other Corps members and REC staff to plan spring community events, including a city-wide Earth Day Clean Up, engaging over 1,000 volunteers and our Annual Spring Garden Festival and Plant Sale.

- Be a part of the greater Commonwealth Corps community, including participating in cross-site learning groups, writing a short profile for the CC newsletter, connecting with other members on our online platforms, and attending optional social/service events.

Who You Are:

You must be:

- A Massachusetts resident with legal authorization to work in the U.S.
- 18 years of age at minimum (average member age range is 18 – 70+ years old)
- Excited to give back to your community and interested in developing your skills and gaining new professional experiences
- Able to balance service internship commitments with personal commitments in a sustainable way
- Are self-motivated, detail oriented, highly organized and reliable
- Able to travel independently to sites via personal or public transportation
- Have strong people and communication skills, both written and verbal

It would also be great if you:

- Are familiar/have experience with the Worcester community, particularly the Bell Hill and Main South neighborhoods
- Have previous experience collaboratively working or volunteering with people of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Speak a language other than English -- multilingual candidates encouraged to apply
- Have experience growing food
- Have experience working with youth in a formal or informal setting
- Are comfortable with online collaboration tools, e.g., shared calendars, email, shared folders/files (Dropbox, Google Drive, Google Apps)
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What You'll Get:

- Stipend of \$625 semi-monthly while in service, up to \$13,125, minus taxes and withholdings;
- **Member assistance program**, including unlimited, confidential, 24/7, phone counseling services and up to three free, in-person counseling sessions;
- **Completion award** of up to \$2000 upon successful completion of service, minus taxes and withholdings;
- **Reimbursement for outside training** or professional development opportunities relevant to member's service and/or goals (Up to \$100; Dependent on approval from MSA) and up to \$200; dependent on approval from REC
- **Extensive training from MSA with a diversity, equity and inclusion focus and other professional development** opportunities;
- **Limited reimbursement for travel** to Corps-wide MSA-sponsored activities;
- **Internet reimbursement** up to \$50/month while required to complete some service from home if required by site;
- **\$80 monthly produce stipend through REC Mobile Market**
- Limited travel reimbursement from their host site for certain service-related travel away from their usual service location, according to that agency's policies;
- **Mental Health/Personal Day** once per month counting towards 4 hrs
- Planned absences and time off at the discretion of the host site, REC. Time off does not count towards total hours completion.

Please note that receipt of these stipends/benefits may impact an individual's eligibility for certain public benefits.

Term of Service:

- **Position Start Date:** August 19, 2024
- **Position End Date:** June 21, 2025
- Service commitment is 20 hours per week per the following schedule:
Service commitment will average 18-20 hours per week with a minimum of two full service days (9-5) and approximately two evenings per month and up to two weekends per month during the months of September, October, April and May, with advance notice. Service schedule/days will be agreed upon at the start of the service term and any changes or additions, including night or weekend hours, will be made with advanced notice.

How to Apply:

- To apply, email a cover letter and resume to Eliza Lawrence at eliza@recworchester.org. Early applications are encouraged as applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Questions about this position can be directed to Eliza Lawrence, School Gardens Coordinator.

Accepted members will be required to undergo a criminal history check.

The Regional Environmental Council will recruit and select persons in all positions to ensure a diverse and inclusive climate without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, color, political affiliation, creed, national origin, marital status, or any other status as protected by federal, state, and local laws. The Regional Environmental Council welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodations for interviews and for service upon request.