



**California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program**
in partnership with AmeriCorps



**CALIFORNIA
VOLUNTEERS**
Office of the Governor

Table of Contents

General WSP Applicant Questions..... 2

 What attributes exemplify a candidate that would be a good fit for WSP?2

 What, if any, physical activity will incoming Corpsmembers be expected to perform?2

 Do I need college degree to join WSP?2

 I am a student. Can I be in the Watershed Stewards Program while I am studying?2

 Do I need to turn in all of my application materials at the same time?2

 Will WSP reimburse me for the costs involved in moving to California and/or finding and securing housing near my Placement Site?2

 Do I qualify for CalFresh (food stamps) as a WSP Corpsmember?3

 If I choose to defer my college loans while serving with WSP, will they still accrue interest?3

 Am I required to have a car?3

 What type of criminal charges would prevent me from enrolling with WSP?.....3

Team Leader Position 4

 Do I need to have already served with WSP to apply for the Team Leader position?4

 Will WSP pay for travel and how often do Team Leaders need to travel?4

Site-Specific Interviews 4

 Does my application packet get sent to all the Placement Sites I ranked in my preference list?4

 Can I contact Placement Sites directly to ask Site-specific questions?.....5

 Can I re-rank my preferred sites after I have interviewed with Placement Sites?5

 If I am offered a position, will I get to choose which Placement Site I will serve at?.....5

 If I am chosen for a position who will make the offer?5



**California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program
in partnership with AmeriCorps**



General WSP Applicant Questions

What attributes exemplify a candidate that would be a good fit for WSP?

- Genuine enthusiasm and curiosity for environmental science, community engagement, AND national service
- Professional demeanor and studiousness
- Flexible with change
- Empathetic towards others

What, if any, physical activity will incoming Corpsmembers be expected to perform?

- This depends on the Placement Site for the most part, but all WSP Corpsmembers will need to pass a pre-enrollment physical examination before officially enrolling into WSP (see Position Analysis)

Do I need college degree to join WSP?

- **No** – although our program is competitive and many of our applicants do have degrees, there is no requirement of one and every year we receive a number of well-qualified applicants without degrees.

I am a student. Can I be in the Watershed Stewards Program while I am studying?

- **No** - WSP requires a full-time commitment (40 hours/week during regular business hours) during the 10.5- month term and is not appropriate for current students.

Do I need to turn in all of my application materials at the same time?

- **No** - but it helps! WSP will not request an initial interview until *most materials* are submitted. We expect that most people will have their Letter of Recommendation sent in separately from their application materials. All materials must be received by the application deadline.

Will WSP reimburse me for the costs involved in moving to California and/or finding and securing housing near my Placement Site?

- **No** - WSP does not have the funds to reimburse applicants for these costs. However, WSP and your Placement Site will cover all cost for travel required for the program/Placement



**California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program
in partnership with AmeriCorps**



Site throughout your term of service.

Do I qualify for CalFresh (food stamps) as a WSP Corpsmember?

- While we cannot guarantee that you will qualify for CalFresh, as it is based on your household income, as a member of an AmeriCorps program, WSP Corpsmembers often qualify for this benefit since their stipend is not considered part of their income when determining CalFresh eligibility. The amount per month is dependent on applicant (average \$280/month).

If I choose to defer my college loans while serving with WSP, will they still accrue interest?

- **Yes** – your student loans will continue to accrue interest. However, if they are *eligible loans*, you can place your loans into forbearance using the MyAmeriCorps portal and you will then be eligible to have the accrued interest paid in full upon the successful conclusion of your term. We will share more information about this during WSP's Orientation.

Am I required to have a car?

- **Yes & No** – Depending on your Placement Site location, it is strongly suggested you have a vehicle. Housing and services are often a distance from Placement Sites and public transport is not always available (especially in rural areas). Some Placement Sites require Corpsmembers to use their personal vehicle for field work (they will be reimbursed).
- All Corpsmembers will need to complete an extensive written and behind-the-wheel test before being eligible to drive any state vehicles.

What type of criminal charges would prevent me from enrolling with WSP?

- We determine eligibility by reviewing the codes an applicant was convicted of once the criminal history check has been run. Convictions of the following make you ineligible:
 - (i) first degree murder equivalent to and/or as defined and described in 18 U.S.C. § 1111;
 - (ii) crimes that require you to register as a sex offender and/or result in you being listed on the National Sex Offender Public Website; and/or,



**California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program
in partnership with AmeriCorps**



-
- iii. (iii) crimes involving arson or against vulnerable populations. Other criminal history results may require your conditional offer of enrollment to be further review; for example: (i) if you are on parole, probation, post release community supervision, or mandatory supervision; and, (ii) if you were convicted of a serious felony or violent crime as defined by California Penal Code section 667.5(c) or 1192.7(c).
 - iv. Convictions sealed under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 781 or Penal Code Section 1203.45 do not apply.
 - v. Corpsmember applicants also cannot be on a parole, probation, post release community supervision, or mandatory supervision status that would prevent them from fully participating in the program (i.e., preventing you from traveling throughout the State on short notice and for extended periods, working with or around inmates, working with CCC tools, working in remote areas with limited and/or restricted access to electronic communication, etc.).

Team Leader Position

Do I need to have already served with WSP to apply for the Team Leader position?

- **No** – Team Leaders (TLs) are often 1st year Corpsmembers with WSP who have more of an interest in community outreach and education and developing their program and project management skills.

Will WSP pay for travel and how often do Team Leaders need to travel?

- **Yes** – WSP provides TLs with state vehicles to conduct all TL activities and they are eligible for meal and limited lodging reimbursements while on travel status.
- TLs travel most weekends between March – June and balance their hours as needed.

Site-Specific Interviews

Does my application packet get sent to all the Placement Sites I ranked in my preference list?

- **No** - your list of preferences is very helpful when we match up applicants with sites, but we do not always send your application packet to every site that you ranked. WSP staff decides



**California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program
in partnership with AmeriCorps**



which applicant packets will be sent to sites based on both the applicants' interests and experience, and the sites' needs.

- WSP may also send your application to sites you did not indicate as a preference if we feel you are a strong candidate and you have identified being flexible on your WSP Application.

Can I contact Placement Sites directly to ask Site-specific questions?

- **No** - because our program receives such a high volume of applicants each year, we ask that you communicate with WSP staff instead of directly with the Placement Sites. If you are chosen for an interview with the Placement Site, you will have an opportunity to communicate directly with them at that time.

Can I re-rank my preferred sites after I have interviewed with Placement Sites?

- **Yes** - you can email your updated ranking preferences to WSP.Recruiter@ccc.ca.gov. After interviews, please only rank sites with which you have interviewed.

If I am offered a position, will I get to choose which Placement Site I will serve at?

- **No** - candidates are offered a single position at one specific Placement Site.

If I am chosen for a position who will make the offer?

- WSP staff will call applicants to offer them positions. You will have several days to accept or decline.
- It is important that you notify WSP staff of any times that you may not be available by email or phone so that we can reach you regarding an offer.