



Michigan Education Corps

COVID-19 Response Policies and Plans 2020-2021

Due to the current situation around the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan Education Corps has developed a plan and policies to be implemented. As the pandemic and research on the virus evolves, our policies may change. Our primary goal is to keep you safe and healthy, while doing our part to minimize further spread of this virus. Michigan schools have a phased [plan](#) for operating, which coincide with the State of Michigan's phased plan for reopening its economy. We will also follow all AmeriCorps and CDC guidance as it becomes available. AmeriCorps members will be updated on any changes to this plan.

Additionally, MEC expects that members and staff follow their service site expectations and requirements for COVID response. Below are the main policies that are important for you to know when serving in person and at your service site:

- ✓ Masks must be worn in all operated sites.
- ✓ Members will (as required) fill out a self-monitoring form each day before they begin service.
- ✓ Hands must be washed or sanitized regularly.
- ✓ Maintain a six foot physical distance from others as much as possible.

Service Sites that require a COVID test

MEC supports our partner sites that request a negative COVID test before reporting to in-person service. Tests must be completed at no additional cost to the member. COVID testing is currently free and a list of available locations can be found [here](#).

Members who become ill during service

In the event a member begins to exhibit signs or symptoms related to COVID during service, they are to leave their site immediately and notify their site supervisor and the program director. Anyone who has symptoms of COVID are required to get tested for COVID, and may not return to their service site until they are either: 1) confirmed negative and are symptom free for 72 hours or 2) following a positive test for COVID, they quarantine for two weeks (14 calendar days), and are symptom free for at least 72 hours.

Members who become exposed to COVID

Should a member become exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID, they are asked to disclose this information to their site supervisor and the program director. Exposure is defined as 15 minutes or more of <6 feet of contact with a known COVID-positive individual. The member may be asked to get tested for COVID, and to serve remotely for up to 72 hours or until their test results are returned. If a member is confirmed positive they will follow the same protocol as described above.

Teleservice during COVID

Teleservice, or providing virtual service from home, is not permitted unless a member provides evidence that they must quarantine at home (either the member is confirmed positive for COVID, awaiting test results, or a member of their household has COVID, or they need to provide care for a family member with COVID), or a service site temporarily closes. In the event that a member must quarantine, or their site closes, they should make arrangements for teleservice with the program director and their site supervisor. Teleservice may be allowed and granted in rare instances after approval of the program director. Please reference the teleservice policy in the MEC Member Handbook for additional guidance.

Suspension of term due to COVID

Members who are affected by COVID due to being ill themselves or have illness in their household/family, may be eligible for a temporary suspension of their term. Members must communicate with the program director regarding any decisions to suspend their term.

Site closure due to COVID

In the event a school site closes due to COVID, members will be expected to serve hours from home doing remote service. The tasks performed will be determined by both the program director and your site supervisor, but may include virtual meetings with students to practice skills; assembling literacy kits to send home to students; other tasks to assist the school with virtual education; professional development webinars; virtual meetings; and/or creating digital content for students. More specific guidance will be provided by Michigan Education Corps if schools close due to COVID.

Prohibited Activities

When considering alternate service opportunities during the COVID-19 crisis, please remember that the following activities are prohibited for AmeriCorps service.

1. Attempting to influence legislation
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
6. 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
7. 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
8. 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(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (7) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;

9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;

10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and

11. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find more information about COVID-19?

All of us can take measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Everyone can do their part to help respond to this emerging public health issue. The best source of COVID-19 resources is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The CDC with the Department of Health and Human Services is the lead government agency on the management of the Coronavirus outbreak. They have created resource guides on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in specific communities. This includes specific guidance for childcare centers and schools, colleges and universities, community events, and first responders, among many others. These guides, along with additional resources and up-to-date information from the CDC, can be found at the following links.

- [CDC Coronavirus Hub](#)

- [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#)

I'm not sure if in-person service is safe for me, how do I know if I'm at higher risk?

This is an evolving proposition, we urge all members to proceed with caution and review valid resources such as guidance from the CDC and other medical and public health authorities.

Should I be worried about finishing my hours?

Members who experience a disruption in their service due to COVID-19 may be exited for Compelling Personal Circumstances on their end date or earlier. We want members to be aware that the amount of their education award is directly tied to the number of hours completed during their service term.

Please communicate directly with your program director if you are concerned about your hours.

Should I submit my timesheet even if I didn't serve any hours?

In order to continue receiving your stipend and benefits, you must submit a timesheet every two weeks and record a minimum of one hour of service. If you are unable to meet the minimum requirement or to complete a timesheet, please connect with your program manager for additional assistance.

How does this situation impact my education award?

To see where you are at in regards to completed hours please view your OnCorps account. Your Program Director will also be able to provide additional guidance and assistance.

Members who experience a disruption in their service due to COVID-19 may be exited for Compelling Personal Circumstances on their end date or before, and could receive a prorated portion of their education award. For example, if you've completed 70% of your total hours requirement, you'll receive 70% of your education award.

It's to a members benefit to complete as much of their service as possible to maximize their education award.

More information on the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award can be found [here](#).

Specific questions regarding your ed award should be directed to the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677.

If I exit early or have reduced hours of service, am I eligible for the expanded unemployment benefits?

Members are not eligible to receive unemployment compensation benefits from your AmeriCorps term of service because no employer-employee relationship exists.

Can I access RCDMS/MCDMS, gather student data, etc?

Members may access any student data or student data system outside of their school site if their site has approved this.

If you are in a situation where you are able to continue tutoring within the Reading Corps or Math Corps model (at site, coached, etc) then this data can be entered into RC/MCDMS. If you are planning to continue tutoring, please reach out to your Program Director to discuss this option and be sure to communicate this to your Master Coach as well.

If you are able to continue tutoring but in a modified way that deviates from the standard model, DO NOT enter any data gathered into RC/MCDMS even if you are at site.

Is talking to my Internal Coach and/or Program Staff (via phone or virtually) allowable time?

Yes, any time spent on the phone or video calls to check-in and discuss anything related to the program, students, site, or service is allowable time and should be recorded as "Service at Site". Be sure to indicate this on the daily description of your timesheet.

Can I assist my school with non-Reading or Math Corps remote learning opportunities for service hours?

You may be able to assist your site with remote learning opportunities. Please talk to your Program Director for approval.

Can I serve at my site to help with childcare, food distribution, Safety protocols or any other vital services they are needing during the school year?

Yes! Any service supporting your site's COVID-19 response, excluding fundraising and prohibited activities, is allowable and can be recorded under "Supplemental Service" on your timesheet. If you are going to help your site with this service, please make sure your Program Manager and Internal Coach are looped in so they can verify your hours. You should document what you are doing in the daily description on your timesheet. Supplemental service needs to be a preapproved Service Opportunity Request (SOR) form in OnCorps or as directed.

However, during this time, we ask all members to prioritize the health and safety of themselves and those around them. We urge all members to proceed with caution and review valid resources such as guidance from the CDC and other medical and public health authorities before serving in the community.

Can I perform service at an alternative organization or location and count it for service hours?

Members must submit a Service Opportunity Request form and receive approval from their program director to be able to serve at an alternate organization or location.

However, during this time, we ask all members to prioritize the health and safety of themselves and those around them. We urge all members to proceed with caution and review valid resources such as guidance from the CDC and other medical and public health authorities before serving in the community.

I want to help support my school/students, but do not feel that I am part of my school's plan. What should I do?

Recognize that our schools are in uncharted territory and doing the very best they can to develop and communicate their plans for students. Please be patient and feel free to reach out to your program director and/or internal coach for support and guidance.