



AmeriCorps

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Member – Application Process

#### **How long will it take to process my completed AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Application?**

Upon submission of your **completed application** to GAP Solutions, Inc., you will receive confirmation within **5** business days about the status of your application (incomplete or in review); if you have submitted an incomplete application, you will be notified at that time about what steps or documentation remain outstanding to process your application. All applications will be verified for eligibility and awarded or denied within 10 days from the date the application was marked completed.

#### **What will delay my application from being approved in a timely manner?**

Missing documentation, lack of response from the member and/or provider, and illegible documents are common challenges in application processing. To ensure there are no delays in processing your application, please make sure that the documents you are uploading, faxing, or scanning are legible and/or scanning clearly. You may refer to the AmeriCorps Childcare Program website at: <http://www.americorpschildcare.com/> for a detailed list of required forms and supporting documentation. An assigned Childcare Coordinator will send e-mail communication to you with information on documentation needed as well as questions about illegible documents. If your application package is incomplete or illegible, your application will be pending review for a period of up to 30 days; incomplete applications will be closed after the 30 days with the option to reopen the application and submit the remaining documentation. *Uploading the documents via our online application or faxing are the most secure methods of sending documents to our office. If you decide to email any of your documents, please ensure you encrypt the documents, then send the documents in one email and the password in a separate email. That will help protect your information from any unintended recipients.*

#### **How many childcare providers can I use if I am approved for the benefit?**

Members may have multiple childcare providers and additionally, childcare providers may change at any time. ALL childcare providers must however be approved through the application process before reimbursement for the member's childcare needs is considered and processed.

Parents are strongly encouraged to consider a back-up childcare arrangement in the event that a primary childcare provider is unable to provide care when it is required. For example, some childcare centers might close on days other than Federal Holidays; members should submit to GAP Solutions a copy of the childcare center's schedule if it is needed to reimburse a back-up childcare provider.

**Finding a childcare provider has been so difficult, do you approve of my adult daughter who lives with me to be my childcare provider?** If your state of residence allows for the use of unlicensed childcare providers, you have the choice of using a household member as a childcare provider except for the child's other biological parent, or adult sibling who lives in the home. Please check our [AmeriCorps Childcare Provider State Guide](#).

**How can I find out more about state benefit limits and why is it so difficult to figure out my own eligibility?**

Each of the 50 states and 5 territories establishes their own regulations for implementing the Childcare and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and each state and territory can change these requirements at any time. Some states publish information on public websites however the information is often lengthy and unclear. GAP Solutions, Inc. has information on the eligibility requirements for each state and is your resource for determining your eligibility and rates; please contact GAP Solutions, Inc. for assistance in the application process and with questions about eligibility. Please note that each state has unique requirements for eligibility. For your convenience GAP Solutions has provided a link to the CCDF Plans as an additional resource. Click [here](#) to view the list of Individual and State and Territory CCDF Plans. Click [here](#) to view the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CCDF State and Territory Contacts. Click [here](#) for links to the rates for each state.

**I have a child with special needs that needs full time care while I am serving for AmeriCorps; am I eligible for the benefit?**

The age limit for children is under 13 years old; however, if you have a child with special needs, you may still be eligible. Please contact GAP Solutions to discuss your child's individual case.

**Please note:** Childcare providers can **only** participate in the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program and be reimbursed for services starting from the moment that they complete all state-required certifications, registrations, and trainings.

**I am an AmeriCorps State & National member working a part time service term, am I eligible for the childcare benefit?**

To be eligible AmeriCorps State & National members must be serving full-time or less-than-full-time but serving in a full-time capacity, meaning performing service at least 32.5 hours per week.

**Am I eligible for childcare benefits while under suspension (for AmeriCorps State and National Members only)?**

No. Members are not eligible for benefits while they are under suspension. However, if you are an AmeriCorps State and National member and were placed in a temporary suspended status and you meet all of the below requirements, you may be eligible to receive up to 12 consecutive weeks of continued benefits:

- The member cannot be suspended for cause and/or other disciplinary actions (for example, the member was given a temporary suspension under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- The member must intend to return to service.
- Member must certify he/she needs the continued benefit in order to be able to return to service.

To ensure no lapse in coverage, the AmeriCorps State and National grantee must notify GAP Solutions in writing within five business days after a member's status changes. Costs incurred due to the grantee's failure to keep GAP Solutions immediately informed of changes in a member's status may be charged to the grantee's organization.

### **I am beginning another term of service with AmeriCorps; do I need to reapply?**

Yes. Members starting another term of service with AmeriCorps are required to reapply; however, there may be instances where some supporting documentation from your previous application is still adequate. Please contact GAP Solutions, Inc. to find out which documents you are required to resubmit along with your new application. **Please note that current income documentation and taxes must be submitted for every new term of service. There might be annual changes in your State Childcare Subsidy Fund Plan that may impact your eligibility for a new term. GAP Solutions will review each new term against the most current Childcare Development Fund Plan.**

### **Do I have the option of in-home care?**

Contact GAP Solutions to find out if your State CCDF Plan grants you the option of in-home care.

### **Due to COVID-19, our school district is following a hybrid learning plan. On days that my child is at home, will you cover for full time care?**

AmeriCorps may cover full time upon verification that the school district is following a COVID-19 hybrid learning schedule.

### **I received a denial for the benefit, what are my next steps to appeal the decision?**

You may directly appeal a denial in writing to the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit Administrator; appeals must be received within **15 business** days of receipt of the denial notification for consideration. In your appeal, you should state and support (with documentation) your claim as to why you meet the eligibility requirements for receipt of the benefit, specifically addressing the ineligibility factors as outlined in your denial. Appeals may be submitted by email, fax, or mail to:

#### **AmeriCorps Childcare Program**

**Attn:** Yamileth Hernandez, Program Director, GAP Solutions, Inc.  
205 Van Buren St.  
Ste.205  
Herndon, VA 20170  
e-mail: [support@americorpschildcare.com](mailto:support@americorpschildcare.com)  
Fax: 1-888-979-8216

Within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, GAP Solutions will notify the AmeriCorps member about the appeal decision.

### **If I am the biological parent, why must I demonstrate proof of custody?**

If the other parent is not part of the household, custody documentation will be necessary. The benefit is to help the AmeriCorps parent with childcare so they can go out to serve. If the child does not live with the AmeriCorps member, then there is no true need for the benefit.

### **Why am I being asked for a letter of need?**

The AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit Program is available for qualified, active, full time AmeriCorps State & National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps members who need the benefit to serve. If a member is not able to prove that the child needing the benefit is in their full physical custody for the days care is needed, a letter of need is required.

### **How do I know if my family is income eligible?**

For your convenience GAP Solutions has created a [State Median Income Table](#). Go to your state row and household size column. The amount is the maximum total monthly gross income threshold to be eligible. Your family household income should fall less than the amount on the table to be eligible. You can find The State Median Income Table at [americorpschildcare.com](http://americorpschildcare.com) under Forms and Printable Resources.

### **Why was I asked to provide a verification of no other income letter?**

If you did not fully complete the income table on page 5 of the AmeriCorps Childcare Member Application, you will be asked to send a verification of no other income letter. The letter should declare all the sources of income, if any, for both you and your spouse/domestic partner or other legal parent in the home. If there is no other income, then the letter should just declare that there is no other income in addition to the AmeriCorps stipend.

### **My parents, or other relatives who live with me, will their income be used to determine my eligibility?**

No. Only the monthly gross income of your spouse, significant other or child's other parent if they live with you are considered when calculating your household income.

### **My spouse/domestic partner is employed part time; am I eligible for the benefit?**

You **may** qualify to receive only part time rates if your spouse is at work part time.

### **My spouse/domestic partner is self-employed and does not have a standard salary check to verify income; what documents are acceptable to provide to demonstrate self-employment?**

If your spouse/domestic partner is self-employed, the following documentation will be required:

- Statement of Work Activity Form
- Quarterly Profit and Loss Statements (applies to business owners)
- Copy of most recent 1040 Federal Tax Return (including all schedules)

### **What is a verification of non-filing?**

A verification of non-filing from the IRS is required if you or your spouse did not file taxes. This can be requested through the IRS website. The letter is available after June 15<sup>th</sup> for the current tax year or anytime for the prior three tax years using Get Transcript Online or Form 4506-T. The IRS will confirm your non-filing status in the form of a letter. To request a copy of your tax transcript or a verification of non-filing letter visit <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>

### **Who can I contact to ask additional questions about the AmeriCorps Childcare Program?**

You may contact GAP Solutions, Inc. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, from 9:00 AM to 6:00PM EST to ask questions about the AmeriCorps Childcare Program in general or inquire about your childcare benefits. GAP Solutions, Inc. may be contacted via email at:

[support@americorpschildcare.com](mailto:support@americorpschildcare.com) or toll-free telephone number at 855-886-0687.

## **Member – Benefit Payment Questions**

### **I don't understand my award. What do these rates mean?**

Your state's CCDF Plan outlines the rates associated with each type of provider. The amount of the rate per child is dependent on where your provider lives and the provider type (licensed, regulated, informal).

A child not enrolled in school is granted both part time and full-time rates. GAP Solutions uses the rate that best fits the attendance of the child when issuing awards and reimbursing childcare providers.

School age children are granted ONLY part time rates while in school. Full-time rates may apply to children registered in half day kindergarten upon confirmation of school schedule. All other school age children will have a full-time rate ONLY to be used for holidays and school breaks. GAP Solutions, Inc. encourages parents to submit each child's school calendar to support any school breaks.

### **Does the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit pay for childcare registration, late, early withdrawal and other childcare fees?**

Only a few states cover registration fees. Ask your state childcare coordinator for more information. All other fees are the responsibility of the AmeriCorps member.

### **How long will it take to process my provider's Attendance Sheet (invoice)?**

Upon receipt of a completed Attendance Sheet Invoice, our staff will process payment within 10 business days. If your provider chose to be paid by check, you must allow 8-10 additional days for postal mail delivery.

### **What will delay my provider's invoice from being paid in a timely manner?**

The following are common causes for a delay:

1. The Attendance Sheet Invoice is missing charges.
2. The Attendance Sheet Invoice is missing hours that each child was in care.
3. The Attendance Sheet invoice is missing a signature from both the AmeriCorps member and childcare provider.
4. The Attendance Sheet Invoice is not dated. Each signature must be dated.
5. A delay can also be a result of lack of proof of weekend charges on the invoice. If you had a need for weekend care, we ask that your supervisor submit confirmation of the weekends you were required to work so we can process payment for those days.
6. A delay can also occur when there's an expired childcare license.
7. Attendance sheets will not be processed until your childcare benefit award has been issued. You can submit the invoice with your application packet but keep in mind that payments will be processed within 10 days from when you are issued the childcare benefit award. If the Attendance Sheet invoice on file is incomplete, we will not be able to process it.
8. If an Attendance Sheet Invoice is completed and submitted too early (before the month is done), it cannot be processed for payment. The AmeriCorps member and the childcare provider should both sign and date the form on the last day of care for the month. The only time an attendance invoice can be submitted for payment before the month ends, is only when care for that month has ended early.
9. A delay can also occur if you received a conditional award. For example: Official Birth Certificate is required before payments can start. If you hold a conditional award, please ensure that the required documents are submitted as soon as possible.

### **Can I resubmit an attendance sheet invoice to correct the hours or days my child(ren) was in care?**

Both you and your childcare provider will be held responsible for ensuring that the hours entered on each Attendance Sheet Invoice are true and accurate. If you have a request to add or remove hours to a previously submitted attendance sheet, you must submit a perjury statement signed by both member and provider as to why the attendance sheet should be modified.

### **My child is enrolled in home schooling. Do you pay for full-time care?**

No. School aged children are approved only for part time childcare while schools are in session. Full-time care is approved only during periods of school breaks confirmed by the school calendar.

### **Does my childcare provider have to enroll in Electronic Deposit?**

ACH Electronic Payments are the preferred method of payment. However, if for any reason your childcare provider does not feel comfortable enrolling in ACH payments, we can set them up to receive payments by paper checks. The benefit of ACH payments is the faster turnaround time. Payments will post to their bank account within 10 business days from when invoice was submitted. To enroll, the childcare provider must complete the Payment Authorization form or contact GAP Solutions for more information. All forms are found at <http://www.americorpschildcare.com/> under Forms/Resources.

### **My application was approved but my provider has not been paid; what can I do?**

First, ask your childcare provider if they have done the following:

- 1.Submitted a signed W-9 form and other documents as requested by GAP Solutions?
- 2.Submitted a complete monthly Attendance Sheet Invoice showing all charges for each month of care?

Second, contact GAP Solutions, Inc. for assistance.

### **My child has been absent due to COVID for more than 5 days a month. Will the benefit cover payment to my childcare provider for those days?**

If the absences were COVID-19 related, you must contact our office with verification of the closing. AmeriCorps will cover for any COVID-19 related absences that resulted in fees to the AmeriCorps member.

### **My provider is requiring that I pay childcare up front; what can I do?**

**Providers are not pre-paid for childcare services; rather, they are paid** after completed documentation has been submitted to GAP Solutions, Inc. demonstrating the childcare services delivered for the previous month. It is recommended that members have a clear understanding of what requirements their childcare provider may have for payment before having the provider come on as an ‘approved provider’ with the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program. Remember, **you as the member are responsible for paying all childcare charges in excess of the childcare benefit amount awarded.**

### **My provider will not reimburse me for money that I paid up front. Can you reimburse me?**

No. The AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit only pays benefits to approved childcare providers on behalf of the serving member. We highly encourage parents to discuss payment arrangements with their providers if they are paying up front and to be sure to understand what the childcare provider’s policy is regarding reimbursement back to the members once the benefit payments begin. It is important not to assume that your childcare provider’s policy allows for reimbursement back to you.

### **I was awarded a monthly rate, but my childcare payment was less than the monthly awarded rate. Why?**

If you were awarded a monthly rate, it is assumed that care is needed every day of the month. If your child exceeded 5 absences in the month, a daily rate will be calculated.

### **What if the monthly childcare benefit is less than the provider's monthly charges?**

**YOU**, the AmeriCorps member, are responsible for paying all childcare charges in excess of the childcare subsidy benefit amount. The childcare benefit cannot exceed the prevailing rate established by the state or territory where the childcare services are provided.

### **Will I be reimbursed for weekend service-related work?**

GAP Solutions will reimburse for weekend service-related work upon receiving confirmation of your work hours from your AmeriCorps site supervisor.

## **Member – Childcare Provider Questions**

### **May I select a provider of my choice?**

The AmeriCorps Childcare Program strongly supports freedom in choosing a childcare provider that offers a stable and safe childcare environment where your child(ren) can best thrive. To find out if your childcare provider is eligible to participate in the AmeriCorps Childcare Program, please contact our helpline at **1-855-886-0687**. Our Childcare Coordinators will assist you in understanding the specific childcare provider eligibility requirements in your state and address any questions you may have.



**Only the types of providers listed as eligible to participate per your State's CCDF plan may participate and be paid through the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit program. To learn about your provider choices, check out the [Childcare Provider State Guide!](#)**

### **Can I use a family member for childcare?**

The biological parent, adoptive parent, adult sibling in the home, or guardian of the child needing the childcare benefit cannot be used as a childcare provider\*. Depending on the state in which the care is provided, other blood relatives may be used. Some states allow a relative to serve as an approved provider and some states do not. **Please note –All childcare providers must be at least 18 years of age to be eligible to participate in the AmeriCorps Childcare program. Please call 1-855-886-0687 about your options for childcare.**

\*For the NCCC program only, the guardian or family member with whom the child is living should also 1) be the childcare provider or 2) serve as the responsible party in selecting an outside childcare provider; **the identified childcare provider however may not be the child's biological, step, or adoptive parent.** For more information, please review the section on [Childcare Provider Types](#).

### **How do I select a qualified childcare provider?**

A qualified childcare provider is one that meets your state's licensing and regulatory requirements to receive federally subsidized childcare funds. Click [here](#) to read about different types of childcare providers. Please remember however that the requirements for **the types of eligible childcare providers depends on the CCDF state requirements in which the care is being provided; some states require that childcare providers meet particular licensing, certification and training requirements.** GAP Solutions, Inc. will be your resource for ensuring that your childcare provider meets state requirements.

**Please note:** childcare providers can **only** participate in the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit Program and be reimbursed for services starting from the moment that they complete all state-required certifications, registrations, and trainings.

### **My state allows for the use of an unlicensed provider; but my provider was still denied, why?**

Two possible reasons why you and your provider may have received a denial for the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits are:

- Your provider couldn't verify their place of residence. (In order for an unlicensed provider to participate in the program, the provider must be able to confirm their physical place of residence). Your provider can do this by presenting any of the following documents: a copy of their current lease in their name; copy of utility bill in their name; State issued ID that matches current address. If the childcare provider is not able to verify their place of residence, they will not be eligible to participate to receive benefit payments.
- Your provider may not have the background check, training and or certification requirements to be eligible per your State CCDF requirements.

Should you receive a denial due to the use of an unlicensed provider, please contact GAP Solutions at **1-855-886-0687** and our Childcare Coordinators will be happy to discuss your specific case with you.

### **How does my provider receive the childcare benefits each month?**

Childcare providers are paid in accordance with the member's approved award rate and after completed documentation has been submitted to GAP Solutions, Inc. demonstrating the childcare services needed and delivered for the previous month; **please note, providers are not pre-paid for childcare services.** The member or the childcare provider must submit a completed AmeriCorps Childcare Program Monthly Attendance Sheet (invoice) after the last day that the childcare has been provided for that month; the Monthly Attendance Sheet Invoice is available [here](#). The member and the childcare provider must sign and certify each monthly Attendance Sheet confirming the following before processing:

- The child's attendance for each day, each week, and each month.
- The total charges for childcare services rendered during each week and the total for the month.
- The childcare provider is an eligible provider in accordance with the CCDF Block Grant program guidelines for the state or territory where the childcare services were provided.

In addition, the member must sign and certify the following:

- The member is still an active participant in the AmeriCorps Program, and
- Nothing has changed in regard to their total household income, household size or AmeriCorps service status that will impact their eligibility in accordance with the CCDF Block Grant program guidelines for the state or territory where the childcare services were provided.

### **My provider is unsure, confused, or has questions about the application process; how can I help my provider?**

Ensure your provider understands the AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program, eligibility requirements, and payment procedures. It is important that providers understand their responsibilities in the application process and the ongoing requirements for benefits payment. Encourage your provider to call GAP Solutions at the **toll-free telephone number at 855-886-0687** if they have any concerns.