

Hello my name is Halie Cousineau, I am an AmeriCorps Alum and now live in Eugene Or. I chose to participate in the AmeriCorps program because I recognized the great service that members were doing in communities and the skills that can be learned through Americorps jobs. By serving, I was able to receive an education award to put towards the cost of my future schooling. With this, I thought that I would be able to finish my education with less of a student debt burden.

Currently, the education award that I received through AmeriCorps as a benefit is subject to state tax. This means that by the time tax season comes around and I report this stipend. Due to serving as an Americorps member I am out more money than I could afford to pay back even though the money has never passed through my hands. Because of this, I have put off using my education award and pursuing my education until I'm able to afford the tax on the scholarship. By eliminating the tax on AmeriCorps educational awards in our state, you are ensuring that AmeriCorps members will stay in the state to use the stipends they have earned at one of our higher education institutions, and we are more likely to stay in the state and participate in the workforce post-graduation. My plan is to either use the educational award for classes that would allow me to gain education in search and rescue, to then become a community rescue volunteer, or use the award towards my future PhD.

As my representative, can I count on you to remove taxes on the AmeriCorps Segal education award, so that AmeriCorps alumni will not be financially burdened when they use the award that they have earned?

Thank you, Halie Cousineau