



PY 24-25 Team UP AmeriCorps
Core Track
Position Description

Garden Coordinator & School Support Specialist

Program Overview: Led by the United Way of SWCO (UWSWC), Team UP AmeriCorps places AmeriCorps members at organizations throughout Southwest Colorado. While these members serve as part of a regional cohort and participate in regional cohort trainings and activities, they spend the majority of their term serving directly at a specific host site organization. **Through collaborative service, Team UP AmeriCorps members develop their own professional skills and passions, expand effectiveness of southwest Colorado organizations, and ultimately support people to thrive.** Team UP has been utilizing collective impact initiatives since 2015 to collaborate across sectors and promote communication towards common goals within rural Southwest Colorado communities.

Southwest Open School (SWOS) is an alternative education campus high school in Cortez, CO that serves young people who live in Montezuma County. The mission of Southwest Open School is to create a community of learners who utilize experiential education in developing and nurturing high academic, character, and health standards while honoring diversity and fostering self-directed lifelong learning. Due to the sheer size of the county, economic hardship can be more difficult in this area and resource scarcity affects the majority of students and families at SWOS. SWOS provides an environment rich in support for its student population. In the 2023-24 school year, SWOS enrolled 134 students, a large percentage of which (42.5%) are Native and Hispanic. Additionally, SWOS has many students who identify as non-binary. SWOS is one of the only alternative education campuses in the region, with more than 90% of their students defined as “at-risk”; however, SWOS has consistently been identified by students as a safe space. According to the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 94% of students at SWOS identified generally feeling safe at school.

Service Position Summary: SWOS is looking to add an AmeriCorps member to its dynamic and close-knit team of staff. The AmeriCorps member will serve a dual role as the Garden Coordinator & School Support Specialist. The SWOS campus has an existing garden and four-season greenhouse. The Garden Coordinator and School Support Specialist will serve to provide much needed maintenance and curriculum development with regards to garden infrastructure. There is the potential for the AC member to incorporate lessons into the garden class and a master gardener program. As a large part of the Garden Coordinator & School Support Specialist’s success will be tied to creating positive relationships with the student population, the AC member will also spend significant time relationship-building and supporting students by joining classrooms to support the academic and behavioral needs of students. The AC member will also expand student support services by providing additional support during class trips and experiential education initiatives.

Duties and Responsibilities: Team UP AmeriCorps members serve directly at their Host Site organization to develop, implement, and enhance programs, projects, and activities through direct and indirect service. Duties include:

- Garden Coordination:
 - Set up and maintain greenhouses (one four-season greenhouse and one three-season greenhouse) and garden infrastructure
 - Develop ways to integrate students into the garden maintenance including but not limited to creating maintenance schedules and task lists.
 - Organize tools and PPE in order to make participation in garden related activities efficient.
 - Develop and collaborate with staff to update and create garden-related curriculum. It is hoped that lessons can be created so that the three STEM classes on campus can utilize the garden space for authentic hands-on learning throughout the school year.
- Student Support Expansion:
 - Build relationships with students by attending school-related events and class trips as an additional resource for support.
 - Build relationships with students by pushing into classrooms for student support.
 - Support student social emotional growth by being an example of responsible adult behavior
 - The AC member, as all staff, will be responsible for supervising and ensuring a safe school campus which begins with creating positive relationships with students.
- Develop strong and positive relationships with staff, students, families, and community
- Track host site and AmeriCorps data
- Attend Team UP AmeriCorps regional trainings, cohort connection days, and Days of Service

Physical, Emotional, and Intellectual Demands:

- Willingness to learn, adapt, and grow in a position
- Ability to serve independently, take initiative, and be motivated by the projects they are doing
- Compassion and awareness: self-awareness, awareness of cultural differences, social differences and understanding of implicit bias
- Strong commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion

Desired Qualifications:

- Ethic of national and community service and a strong desire to create positive change
- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing; computer literate
- High School Graduate or GED required, college graduate or equivalent work experience preferred
- Ability to pass criminal history check
- Reliable transportation & proof of auto insurance
- U.S. Citizenship or lawful permanent resident status required

Term of Service - Time Commitment: This is a Three-Quarter Time national and community service position requiring, at a minimum, a total of 1200 hours during the year (approximately 40 hours/week.) The position begins September 9, 2024 and ends May 31, 2025*. Flexible hours are required, including occasional evening and weekend commitments. Service on the following dates is required:

*There is the possibility to serve a second-term in a part-time capacity during the summer months to continue the garden work.

- September 9-10: Team UP AmeriCorps Member Orientation
- September 11: Host Site Orientation
- October TDB: Fall Group Service Day
- Jan. 20 : MLK Jr. Day of Service Event
- March 31: Cesar Chavez Day of Service Event
- 2nd Tuesdays of Nov, Feb, April, & June: regional Team UP AmeriCorps Member Trainings

Training and Support Provided: Team UP AmeriCorps members receive significant training and experience in community engagement, project implementation, leadership, diverse populations, and more. Up to 20% of total hours served may be spent in applicable, approved trainings. Members will be supervised and supported by SWOS Executive Director Casey Simpson (csimpson@cortez.k12.co.us), as well as by Team UP AmeriCorps program staff. The PY 24-25 cohort of Team UP AmeriCorps members serving throughout the region will also act as additional resources and support for each other.

Location and Service Conditions: This position is based at SWOS at 401 N. Dolores Rd. in Cortez, Colorado. Additional other off-site engagement and partnership activities may be required.

Benefits:

- A living allowance of approx. \$1,000/per pay period (twice per month). Taxes are deducted and the living allowance is distributed by direct deposit to the member's bank account.
- An education award of \$5,176.50 upon successful completion of term of service.
- Health Insurance
- Childcare Assistance, if qualifications are met
- It is possible to temporarily postpone repayment of qualified student loans through forbearance while serving as an AmeriCorps member
- Mileage reimbursement for travel to required AmeriCorps trainings and gatherings
- Non-tangible benefits including extensive training, valuable experience, networking, and the opportunity to serve the local community in a crucial area of need

Diversity and Equal Opportunity: United Way values the diversity of our community. In principle and in practice the diverse nature of our board, staff, and volunteers is recognized as one of our best assets. We respect each individual's unique gifts and prohibit unfair or discriminatory practices against anyone because of age, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and any other protected category.

To Apply:

Step 1. Email a cover letter and resume to Team UP AmeriCorps Coordinator Anne Poirot @ AnneP@unitedway-swco.org. Be sure to indicate which position(s) you are interested in.

Step 2. Create an account on myAmeriCorps.gov and submit an application for the <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?fromSearch=true&id=122725>. **Please complete BOTH steps to apply.**