



Ways to Use Your Education Award

After successfully completing an AmeriCorps service term, you are eligible to receive a [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) that can be used to pay for college, technical school, or to pay back qualified student loans (see non-traditional uses below). Keep in mind, your Education Award is managed by AmeriCorps, not Utah Conservation Corps. Learn more on the [AmeriCorps website](#).

Non-Traditional Uses

Outdoor Adventure and Leadership

Use your Education Award to enroll in an outdoor leadership school where you can embark on an expedition, learn wilderness first aid, and develop skills in environmental ethics, outdoor leadership, and more.

- [National Outdoor Leadership School \(NOLS\)](#)
NOLS offers a variety of classes around the world in mountaineering, rock climbing, horse packing, skiing/snowboarding, and wilderness medicine. They also offer classes to become an instructor. NOLS will even match your award for certain semester-long and year-long courses. [Learn more here](#).
- [Outward Bound](#)
Outward Bound offers a variety of outdoor experiences, ranging from one-week expeditions to semester-long programs. Some higher education institutions offer college credit for successfully completing courses. These experiences provide opportunities to develop outdoor skills, leadership abilities, and group facilitation techniques. Additionally, Outward Bound offers instructor courses for those interested in pursuing a career in experiential education. [Learn more about how to use your Education Award here](#).
- [The International Wilderness Leadership School \(IWLS\)](#)
IWLS allows you to travel abroad or within the U.S. using your Education Award, and some programs may even count towards college credit. Choose a semester or year-long program to learn canyoneering, backpacking, and more.

Medical Skills Training

- [Desert Mountain Medicine](#)
DMM offers several wilderness medicine courses including those designed specifically for outdoor enthusiasts, outdoor professionals, medical professionals, and instructor courses. They

also partner with University of Colorado Denver to offer college credit for DMM WFA and WFR courses. [Learn more here.](#)

- [Aerie Backcountry Medicine](#)

Aerie offers a variety of programs across the country and internationally. They offer courses in Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMT, as well as a full semester in Wilderness Medicine. You can receive college credit through the University of Montana for most courses and use your Education Award to pay for it. Check out their website for more details!

- [NOLS](#)

In addition to expeditions and outdoor skills training, NOLS also offers a number of wilderness medicine courses including Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMT, and more. NOLS accepts AmeriCorps Education Awards for these courses and even may match for tuition to a semester or year-long course.

Trade Schools & Certificates

- [Trade School](#)

Trade school is a great option to become trained in a particular career or to learn a new skill. Consider going to culinary school, becoming a massage therapist, or even getting your pilot's license! If you would like to go to a trade school, check to see if the school is on the Title IV list. These institutions often provide the same focus areas as trade schools but for a fraction of the cost.

- [Non Profit Management Certificates](#)

- [Non-profit Leadership Alliance](#): If you already have a bachelor's degree, you can take online non-profit management classes and attend a conference to be certified in non-profit leadership through the Non-Profit Leadership Alliance. The NPLA is a national alliance of colleges, universities, and nonprofits whose mission is to educate, prepare, and certify professionals to strengthen and lead nonprofit organizations. Participation in the Non-profit Leadership program builds on degrees by providing the skills and knowledge to achieve success as an entry level nonprofit professional. Graduate level classes may also be available, depending on the school.
- [Non Profit Management Intensive Track at Duke University](#): Earn a certificate in non-profit management in just 8 days through the Continuing Studies program at Duke University. You don't need to be a student at Duke to enroll. Register in advance as registration tends to close quickly.

- [Yoga Teacher Certification](#)

There are generally two ways to do this. You can either go through a community college that offers yoga instructor certification classes or go through a non-profit certification program that accepts financial aid. Community college programs are generally cheaper and may be more familiar with financial aid, but private programs are worth looking into as well.

- Leave No Trace Master Educator
Become certified to become a Leave No Trace Educator through NOLS. This course is only 5 days long and averages about \$600-\$800 in cost. [Read more about the program here.](#)
- Colorado Fire Camp
You can use your award to take any of the following classes from Colorado Fire Camp: Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, First Responder, S-130/190, Firefighter 2, S-131/133/211, Firefighter 1, S-212, Sawyer/Faller, S-230/231, Crew Boss/Engine Boss, S-234 and Ignition Operations. Refresher classes are also available if you just want a review. It's a great way to get your red card or brush up on your skills. [Learn more about Colorado Fire Camp here.](#)

Study Abroad

Start by researching Title IV international schools. These are institutions that process U.S. federal student aid, such as Stafford loans. If your My AmeriCorps account will not allow you to send funds overseas, you might consider taking out a Stafford or other federal student loan and then repaying the loan with your award. If an overseas school is NOT listed as Title IV but you still want to use your Education Award, consider enrolling in a school stateside and participate in an exchange program. That way, you are paying your tuition to a school inside the U.S. while attending a school overseas. Another option is serving abroad through Global Service Corps. Global Service Corps offers the ability to earn college credit while having overseas service experience. [Learn more here.](#)

School Supplies

While many schools allow this, it is at the discretion of their financial aid office. You can use your award to pay for expenses within the school's predetermined Cost of Attendance. (Cost of Attendance is a financial aid term for the general amount it would cost for a student to attend that school).

Enrichment Classes

You can use your award to take individual classes at a community college or public university, as long as they're Title IV accredited. These classes span a wide range of subjects, from guitar and swimming to photography and beyond. By taking one or two classes per quarter/semester at a community college you can extend the longevity of your award and greatly enrich your learning experience. Additionally, your award can be applied to writer's conferences and other activities offered through eligible institutions, as long as the tuition is paid to those institutions.

Start Your Own Business

Most community colleges have business start-up classes that coach you while you start your business. Some schools even offer business incubator opportunities, which is a place for your business to grow during its beginning stages. There, you will have support, access to resources, and networking opportunities with other new entrepreneurs. Check with your local community college to see what entrepreneurship opportunities they offer.