

AgCorps Newsletter

July |2026 |



AgCorps is an AmeriCorps program operated through the Montana Department of Agriculture. AgCorps aims to improve the capacity of partner organizations to meet their mission, grow collaborations, provide effective programming, and create resilient, healthy, safe, and engaged communities in Montana.

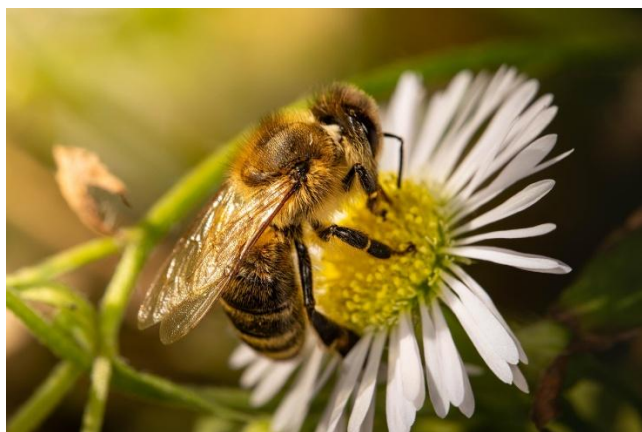
AmeriCorps is the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. The AmeriCorps mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps continuously tackles the nation's most pressing challenges by getting things done for America.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Sydney



Sydney is a returning member to the AgCorps program. She is the Apiary and Natural Resources Specialist serving with the Montana Department of Agriculture. Sydney brings a passion for pollinators (specifically bees) that is incredibly inspiring! She joins us from Atlanta, GA where she earned a bachelor's degree in Ecology from The University of Georgia. Known as the local “bee doctor”, Sydney is a wonderful addition to our AgCorps cohort.



Current program Impacts



AmeriCorps utilizes multiple techniques to gather program information and impact. One of those techniques is through performance measures. These are national or program generated outcomes and outputs for a particular program. The AgCorps program is currently on track to meet and/or exceed all performance measure goals.

Stewardship Education

Defined as organized efforts to teach about how natural environments function and how human beings can manage their behavior and choices in order to live sustainably within those environments.

As of June 2026, the program has taught **1,987 individuals**

Capacity Building

Defined as a set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations.

As of June, the program has provided capacity building services to **32 organizations and/or programs.**

Volunteer Generation

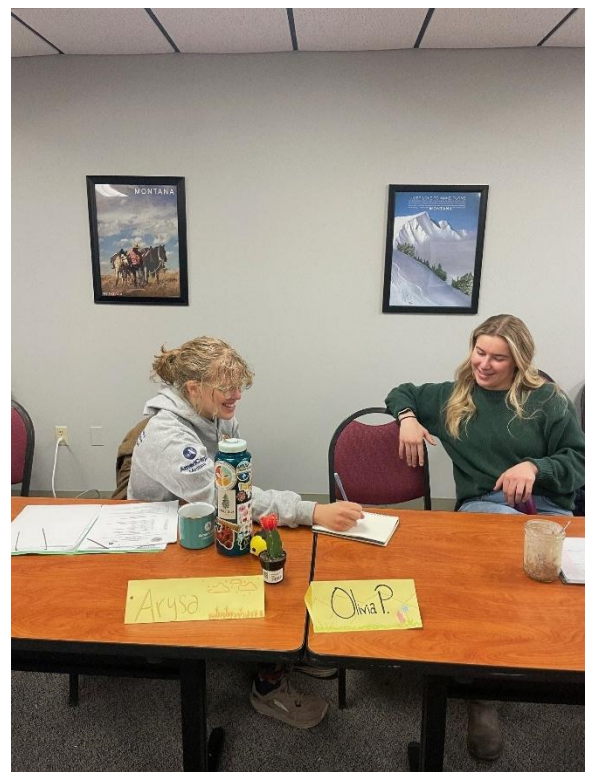
As of June, the program has recruited and retained at least **136 individuals**

FUN FACT: In 2026 alone, the program has provided **11,190** service hours to communities across Montana!

ORIENTATION



Members taking the AmeriCorps pledge on the steps of the Montana state capital and participating in team building activities.



Orientation is a time at the beginning of a member's service term where there is a chance to meet all the other cohort members, learn the ins and outs of AmeriCorps Service, and be officially sworn in as AmeriCorps members serving in Montana. Orientation was a great success this year. The topics and events included:

- The history of National Service by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service

- An AmeriCorps networking hour and budget discussion
- Emotional Intelligence and Navigating your AmeriCorps term with Shannon Stober (Jump Start Training and Development)
- Engaging presentations with Megan Hoyer (Montana Dept. of Ag)
- A tour of our great capital building by the Montana Historical Society
- A service activity in coordination with the Lewis and Clark Humane Society
- Member Assistance Plan overview by America's Service Commissions
- An introduction to Montana Tribes by Mike Jetty (Indian Education for All)
- Engaging and meaningful Teambuilding activities

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #2: Brooke



Brooke is another returning member for the program. She serves as the Mapping and Monitoring Specialist for the Department of Ag. Also joining us from Atlanta, GA, Brooke brings an excitement for GIS and other mapping software that is visible in all that she has accomplished. Graduating from Emory University with a degree in Environmental Science and Policy, Brooke brings a skillset that has been incredibly influential for the department's noxious weed program.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD



Amanda: I taught my first school visit completely on my own, which was a big milestone in my AmeriCorps experience and a moment I'm really proud of. Leading the lesson alone gave me the chance to build confidence while guiding students through hands-on activities like the solar car project.

Olivia: The month of February was full of great experiences, especially in the classroom with the kids! During our Harvest of the Month cooking lesson I found it incredibly inspiring to see 8th graders focus in on the cooking and work as a team to make enough Beet Hummus to hand out nearly 300 samples for their classmates throughout the district! I also have enjoyed spending time with our Junior High Garden Club members. These kids have been involved in preparing for Free the Seeds, they know how to clean and pack seeds, create promotional posters for the event, and work together as a team to create a welcome banner to the event. The principle of respect for all living things is very apparent amongst the kids who engage with our programming.

Arysa: This AmeriCorps experience has improved my communication already. Most of the people I work with are teachers who are always busy taking care of students or prepping for other classes. I have been trying to find the balance between patience and acting. Additionally, this service role is pushing me to trust myself more. I am building confidence in my decisions and knowledge base.

Averie: I have made a lot of new professional connections in the Greater Livingston Area and have enjoyed learning about local culture and history. I have gotten to go into local public schools and assist with cooking lessons, which has been a lot of fun. I have recently started preparing a large garden at my host site because the weather has been unseasonably warm and it has felt good to start getting my hands in the dirt and to work toward growing food.

ALL MEMBER GATHERING



All Member Gathering is an event that takes place in the middle of a member's service term. The goal of this event is for the members to reflect on their accomplishments so far and think on what they hope to achieve in the second half of their term. It is a great opportunity to stop and reflect on why choosing AmeriCorps service continues to be the right choice for these amazing members.



Some of the topics during the event this year included:

- Resume and career services workshops with MSU's Career Services
- Mind Styles with Shannon Stober (Jump Start Training and Development)
- A Tour of the HORT Farm, the MSU Food Lab, and the MSU Plant Growth Center
- A service activity with Townes Harvest
- Multiple reflection activities including a guided civic reflection
- Engaging and meaningful Teambuilding activities

MEET OUR 2026 HOST SITES





The Montana Department of Agriculture acts as both the operating site of the grant as well as a host site for multiple AmeriCorps members. We have members assisting in the Noxious weed division, the Sustainability program, the Natural Resources program and the Ag Finance, Trade and Development Bureau. You can find more information on the Montana Dept. of Agriculture [here](#).



Garden City Harvest plants seeds and grows together to create a healthy community at over 20 sites throughout Missoula, including neighborhood farms, school gardens, and community gardens. The organization provides the community with educational opportunities to learn about sustainable agriculture as well as opportunities to participate directly in agriculture. You can find more information on Garden City Harvest [here](#). Hellgate Elementary school recently created a school garden and shares a member with Garden City Harvest. You can find more information about Hellgate's school garden [here](#).



At FSPC, we see a future where all Park County communities have a deep and meaningful connection to food and where it comes from. Our school-based programs have evolved and expanded to address specific needs within the community. Our initiatives include K-12 agriculture, nutrition, and cooking education, the establishment of community and school-based urban agriculture for both educational and food production purposes, and active involvement in regional school food reform efforts. You can find more information on Farm to School of Park County [here](#).



Farm Connect Montana is a state-wide organization and serves many different non-tribal and tribal communities across Montana. Their mission is to grow a healthy local food community by preserving farmland, teaching new farmers, and making food accessible for all. Farm Connect Montana believes in a Montana where houses, farms, and ranches thrive together; people are well-fed and food secure; family farms are supported within a community food system; and beginning farmers and ranchers can access agricultural land to feed the rest of us! You can find more information on Farm Connect Montana [here](#).



Land to Hand

M O N T A N A

Originally *Farm Hands – Nourish the Flathead*, **Land to Hand** is a grassroots, community organization founded by farmers, eaters, business leaders, and food system planners from around the Flathead Valley. Our interests include ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable ways of growing food and making it accessible to everyone regardless of income. You can find more information about Land to Hand Montana [here](#).



The Montana Farmers Union is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the agricultural way of life. The organization took root as homesteaders arrived, and farmers and ranchers discovered the necessity of getting together in one common cause. It was believed that the desire for a profitable market for the products of the farm or ranch could best be accomplished by real cooperation. The organization stands on three pillars that guide their work: Cooperation, Education and Legislation. You can find more information on Montana Farmer's Union [here](#).



The Montana State Library (MSL) is a state agency that serves to strengthen libraries and provides information and resources on government publications, water and natural resources, geographic datasets, and cultural and historical documents to expand knowledge and empower decisions for our patrons and partnering organizations. Housed within MSL is the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MTNHP). The mission of the MTNHP is to be the state's source for reliable and objective information on Montana's flora, fauna, and biological communities, emphasizing those of conservation concern. You can find more information on the Montana State Library [here](#).



MetraPark, a multi-use complex, provides entertainment, trade, athletic, educational and agricultural needs of the region by providing quality facilities, programs, and events with complete and efficient services to the economic benefit of the region. MetraPark covers 189 acres and houses multiple facilities on the property. MetraPark recently started a People's Garden which will be this member's primary focus. You can find more information about MetraPark [here](#).

Are you interested in becoming a host site with Montana AgCorps? We are always accepting applications for host sites. Follow the link below to fill out an application and we will be in touch when we have an opening!

<https://agr.mt.gov/AgCorps>

CURRENT PROGRAM OPENINGS



Positions for the 2027 Cohort will be available starting in July. Check back on our website to learn more:

<https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/A-D/AgCorps-pages/Current-Positions>

Find Us on Social Media!

Facebook: @MontanaAgCorps

Want to be added to our email list? Let us know by sending an email to MTAgCorps@mt.gov

Amanda Coyle
AgCorps Program Coordinator
Amanda.Coyle@mt.gov (406) 444-7819

Jasmine Chaffee
AgCorps Program Director
Jchaffee@mt.gov (406) 444- 3140