

Student Conservation Association National Cooperative Agreement



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Authority

33 USC 2339, WRDA 2000, Section 213a: Assistance Programs, as amended by WRRDA 2014, Section 1047(e)

- To further training and educational opportunities about water resources development projects
- May enter into cooperative agreements with non-Federal public and nonprofit entities
- For services relating to natural resources conservation or recreation
 - Delegation of authority provided down from the Secretary of Army to ASA (CW), DCW, MSC Commanders, District Commanders in spring 2015
 - Allows district grants officers to enter into local cooperative agreements under this authority
 - Similar to a contract, but provides more flexibility in the scope of work that often results in more getting done than through a contract
 - Career pipeline to participants, more diversity of employees



National Student Conservation Association (SCA) Cooperative Agreement

- National cooperative agreement administered by Fort Worth District, signed February 1, 2021. (1 year plus 3 options years, valid through January 31, 2025)
- USACE pays for crews and interns in a fee-for-service cost share, transferring funds via repositioning to SWF
- Corps provides training, equipment, on-the-job transportation
- SCA provides round-trip travel and living allowance, housing, liability/health insurance, *AmeriCorps education awards
*(when available)



SCA SNAPSHOT

SCA is a nationwide force of high school, college-aged and young adult members engaged in protecting, restoring and interpreting America's public lands and green spaces.

- Founded in 1957
- Urban, Rural and Backcountry Placements/Programs
- Youth and Young Adult+ Members
- National Coop Agreements with DOI/USDA/DoD agencies
- 95,000+ alumni
- 20-year partnership with USACE
- 30+ States, 115+ sites, 800+ Members



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COMMON DISCIPLINES

SCA members serve in a variety of resource management disciplines and capacities including:

- Fire and Invasive Species Management
- Fisheries and Wildlife Management
- Forestry and Land Management
- GIS Mapping/Data Collection (Boundaries, Assets)
- Park Operations
- Public Outreach and Education/Water Safety
- Social Media & Public Relations
- Trail Maintenance and Development
- Visitor Services/Visitor Use Surveys
- Volunteer Coordination and Community Engagement



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SCA PROGRAM MODELS

1. Conservation/Recreation Interns

- 18 years and older
- Nationally or locally recruited to match desired skills and requirements requested by site
- 12 weeks to 12 months, serve at any time of year

The Corps provides:

- Funding
- Housing (or cost of housing)
- On-the-job transportation
- Training and supervision; professional development opportunities
- Challenging and enriching positions
- Time log verification and performance evaluations

- Cost Range: \$5,000 - \$45,000 depending upon length, availability of housing and other programmatic variables.



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SCA PROGRAM MODELS

2. Conservation/Recreation Teams

- Comprised of 3-5 SCA Members (interns)
- Supervised by an SCA Team Leader
- Include SCA vehicle, gear, equipment, tools
- Three weeks to 10 months
- Specialized projects: habitat improvement, trail construction, invasive management, GIS mapping
- Require minimal oversight by the host site

The Corps provides:

- Funding
- Project direction and oversight
- Housing (or cost of housing) – camping is sometimes an option

➤ Cost Range: \$30,000 - \$100,000+ depending upon length, size, availability of housing, vehicle needs and other programmatic variables.



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SCA'S KEY ROLES

▪ **Recruitment:**

- SCA provides intern applicants to site; site interviews and selects member(s).
- Work crews/teams are selected and placed by SCA in coordination with host sites.

▪ **On-line Position Management**

- Position Descriptions, Applicants, Time and Work Logs, Evaluations

▪ **HR, Admin and Program Support:**

- SCA administers all member benefits including living allowance, travel allowance, housing allowance (if applicable), commuting allowance (if requested), health insurance, AmeriCorps Education Award (if eligible), background check and SCA clothing/gear.

▪ **Risk Management:**

- SCA provides worker's comp coverage, liability and accident insurance and operates a 24-7 emergency response system for managing field incidents involving SCA members.



SCA offers flexibility and accommodation to changing circumstances and unforeseen events.



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RECRUITMENT OPTIONS

“National” Recruitment (by SCA):

SCA utilizes the position description (intern request form) submitted by site to generate an applicant pool. Applicants are then shared with the site coordinator to review, interview and select. SCA on-boards intern once confirmed selection is made.

“Local” Recruitment (by USACE Project site):

Site commits to recruiting a local candidate (daily commuter). Selected candidate contact info is shared with SCA and guided through the SCA intern application process before being ‘placed’ into the position.

SCA Teams/Crew Recruitment:

SCA recruits and selects Leaders and Members based upon the required KSA’s (knowledge, skills and abilities) necessary to complete the identified project work.



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2021-2022 Cost Estimates for USACE

Length of Service	Estimated Cost (w/housing provided)	Estimated Cost (w/\$500/mo. Housing Allowance)	Estimated Cost (w/\$750/mo. Housing Allowance)
12 weeks (3 months)	\$4,260 - \$5,890	\$6,330 - \$7,660	\$7,370 - \$8,700
16 weeks (4 months)	\$5,350 - \$6,540	\$8,110 - \$9,300	\$9,490 - \$10,680
26 weeks (6 months)	\$10,820 - \$11,670	\$15,000 - \$15,800	\$17,030 - \$17,880
52 weeks (12 months)	\$26,500	\$34,750	\$38,900

Assumptions:

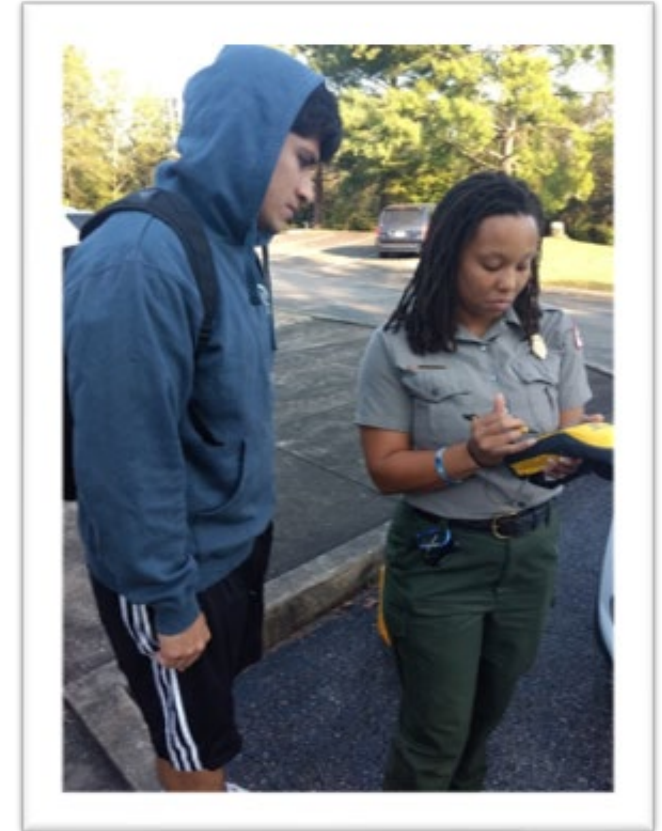
- Input variables influencing costs presented above include recruitment (SCA or USACE), local or non-local, travel allowance or commuting allowance, and housing allowance rate.
- Weekly Living Allowance: minimum, \$85/week for 12-16 week positions, \$160/week for 17-52 week positions. If desired, partners can increase the weekly rate (will also increase cost).
- Interns recruited by SCA will be reimbursed for 'relocation' travel expenses (round trip, home to project site) capped at \$1,100 (and billed as actual once known). Interns recruited locally by USACE will receive a weekly commuting allowance (amount determined by site) in lieu of 'relocation' travel reimbursement.
- Intern housing is the responsibility of the host site. If housing is not available at the project site, a monthly "housing allowance" (specific 'rate' determined by site) will be included in the cost estimate.
- Interns serving 42 weeks or more are eligible for Health Insurance (cost included in 52 week cost estimates above). If intern declines Health Insurance coverage, insurance costs are not billed.
- Interns may be able to apply for an AmeriCorps Education Award (if/as available) valued at between \$1,638 and \$6,195. The actual award amount is determined by the internship length/total service hours.
- All intern allowances are subject to FICA, Medicare and SUI withholding taxes. Consequently, interns receive net amounts less than the gross weekly and/or monthly amounts included in the cost estimate.
- Additional expense lines included in costs above: SCA worker's compensation, recruitment, enrollment, clothing/gear, SCA background check, risk management, program support, FICA taxes and administration.
- Internship lengths can be any number of weeks between 12 and 52, start at any time of year and are ultimately determined by the site to meet site-specific project needs and/or budgetary considerations.
- All costs stated above are estimated costs. SCA will submit invoices based upon actual costs once known.



MEMBER BENEFITS

- “Expense Paid” via various allowances*
- Travel expense reimbursement (for non-local members)
- AmeriCorps Award (if/as eligible and available)
- Health Insurance (for long-term positions)
- Career Exploration
- Skills Development
- Trainings and Certifications
- NETWORKING
- National Service

**SCA Leaders receive a wage*



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

*****NOTE:** It is strongly recommended that you review the Master Cooperative Agreement before submitting a request.

1. Requesting site prepares and submits a Work Order Description (SOO) to the Fort Worth (SWF) PMs in Operations (Kathy Gately/Jennifer Linde).
 - Include a comprehensive position description: location, internship duties, service dates/length, required/desired skills, logistics, housing, living allowance, driving requirements, transportation, training/education/skills, job hazard assessment, USACE points of contact, etc.
 - Allow **at least 16 weeks** between the submittal of the position request and the targeted start date.



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

2. During step 1, the requesting site should set up labor cross charges for the following and provide the information to the SWF PMs:

M2R0A00 (SWF PM- Linde and Gately)	\$1500
M2HO300 (Program Analyst Support)	\$1000
M2P0700- (Contract Specialist/Grants Officer)	\$2500

*This is an estimate to get the work started. Additional funding may be needed depending on the requirement and complexity of the agreement. Additional funding may also be requested to perform a modification and/or at the end of the period of performance to close out the agreement. Contracting labor rates for a modification are \$1500; for a deobligation and closeout, \$1705 (for agreements with a remaining balance of over \$1000) and for a closeout (for agreements with a remaining balance under \$1000) \$637. These labor rates are as of 4 February 2021.

3. Requesting site must state what substantial involvement the government will have with SCA. (i.e. Coordinate services relating to natural resources conservation or recreation management; Provide close monitoring daily during project performance and job training; Involve interns in development of program decisions such as outdoor recreation management, visitor services, and natural resources conservation, etc.)



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

4. Requesting site identifies the total budget amount available for interns/crews and the fund type.
5. Upon receipt of the Work Order Description, SWF PM creates project folders, Work Order spreadsheet entry, and checks Scope of Work to be in proper form.
6. Based on the information submitted by the requesting site, the SWF PMs will prepare the Statement of Objectives (SOO), the Request for Proposal (RFP), and the Project information Sheet (PIS) to be submitted to the Grants Specialist (GS) and Grants Officer (GO).
7. The SWF PMs enter the appropriate information into the Contracting's work flow system (currently PCF/PAN). If it has not been provided prior to this, the PM will also notify the requesting office that the request is ready to be submitted to contracting and will require a labor cross charge code for the GS/GO, Org. code M2P0700. Specific amounts are subject to change and must be coordinated with SWF.



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

8. Requesting site will need to provide funds via repositioning. They will also need to set up a labor cross charge for M2H0300 for \$1000 to process the Customer Order. Once the Customer order (MIPR) is received, the Program Analyst in M2H0300 will set up the contractual PRAC for Grants Officer for the Work Order.
9. The project is assigned to the GO/GS.
10. The SWF PMs will forward the SOO, the RFP, and the PIS to the GS/GO.
11. The GS submits the position per an RFP Letter to SCA. SCA completes and submits an SCA intern request form on the SCA on-line portal at <http://mysca.force.com/partner>.
12. SCA responds with proposal and a price estimate to the GO. Estimates include both direct and indirect costs and are ultimately determined by the number of service weeks and the established incremental costs (i.e. benefits and allowance rates). Oftentimes there will be a period of discussion and adjustment before a cost estimate is finalized.



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

13. SCA will provide the following to the GS/GO:
 - i) Internship-specific cost estimate – detailed, line-item budget in standard format
 - ii) Unique SCA position tracking number to be referenced on all funding documents
 - iii) Signed SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance that mirrors the SCA cost estimate.
14. GS/GO finalize proposal with SCA and submit proposal to the SWF PM and requesting site for technical and cost analysis.
15. The PM in coordination with the requesting site conducts a technical and price analysis. The PM writes an acceptance memorandum which includes price and cost analysis. The technical analysis will include a Determination of Fair and Reasonable Price for GO Approval.
16. The technical and price analysis is submitted to the GS/GO.



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Process to Obtain Interns/Crews

17. If needed, the requesting site also provides funding of request if the amount is greater than the estimated amount in the Statement of Objectives. The Requesting site will need to set up a MIPR to M2R0A00 (SWF Operations) for the estimated amount the PM designates. Once the Customer order (MIPR) is received the Program Analyst in M2H0300 will set up the contractual PRAC for Grants Officer for the Work Order.
18. Upon acceptance of the price and cost analysis, the GO signs GO Award Determination, and if necessary, coordinates legal review for legal sufficiency to award any Work Order/Modification that exceeds \$500K.
19. The GO awards Work Orders and Modifications.
20. The GS electronically places the Work Order in the SCA Account. A copy of the signed Work Order/Modification is also electronically distributed to SCA, the PM and Requesting Site by email.
21. The GS updates the DAADS system to record the obligation of funds or the de-obligation of funds.



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NOTE

At all times, Corps employees need to be very careful about not obligating the Government to any course of action or financial commitment when discussing aspects of this program outside USACE.

For example, be careful discussing benefits provided directly to interns by SCA such as scholarship or tuition voucher programs administered by SCA, which are not part of this cooperative agreement.



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Invoicing

- SCA will send invoices (SF 270) to the SWF PM as often as monthly but may spread out to every two or three months depending on the length of the project. The SWF PM will send the invoices to the project for verification.
- Invoices should be reviewed by the project site within 48 hours (This is not a hard deadline. It is a recommended response time). Once verification is received from the project, the SWF PM will direct the program analyst in SWF to proceed with payment. The project is responsible for tracking and verifying hours worked.
- The SWF program analyst in M2H0300 will input the invoice into CEFMS and send to Millington once all verification is made and the invoice is signed. ENG 93 forms are not required for cooperative agreements.



Direct Hire Authority

- FY20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) amends Section 9905 of Title 5, United States Code. This modified DHA incorporates, streamlines, and simplifies certain DoD civilian hiring authorities into one seamless tool.
- FY20 NDAA, Section 1109, Certain Personnel of the DoD: Authorized non-competitive appointment of qualified candidates for permanent, term, and temporary appointments (GS-15 or below) related to Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM).
- Post-Secondary Students and Recent Graduates: Currently enrolled or graduated within past 2 years (4 years for Veterans) – Appointments up to GS-11, full performance level may be higher. Public notice required. Limited Allocations.
- STEM positions: Any US citizen that meets the qualification requirements for the grade level. Requires notice on USAJobs. Applicable to 0401 job series, GS-11 to GS-15. Allocations not restricted.



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Direct Hire Authority

- Non-competitive temporary and term appointments for critical hiring needs: NTE 18 months. All GS levels up to 15. Public notice not required. No authority to non-competitively convert to any other appointment.
- Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA): Non-competitive hiring authority for any grade up to GS-11. Eligibility (Disabled, served on active duty during a war declared by Congress or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, participated in a military operation for which AFSM was awarded, or separated from active duty within the past 3 years). Can be converted to career or career-conditional appointment after 2 years of successful service.

NOTE: MSCs and Districts may have stricter policy than national guidance. Check with your CPAC for local policies and the particular scenario/type of candidate you are trying to use DHA to bring onboard. The duties of the position and grade level will determine the eligible type of DHA.



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Resources: NRM Gateway

<https://corpslakes.erc.dren.mil/partners/national.cfm?Partner=sca>



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Natural Resources Management Gateway

to the future . . .

Home Visitors Lake Discovery Recreation Env Compliance Env Stewardship Partners ?
News/Events People Forums Learning GETS Tools New Postings Submit Index/Search ?

Student Conservation Association

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America's conservation corps. Our members protect and restore national parks, marine sanctuaries, cultural landmarks and community green spaces in all 50 states.

SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.

Tens of thousands of green professionals, from park superintendents to urban planners, can trace their start to SCA. This is where college and high school students connect with nature, render hands-on service, gain new skills and perspectives, and launch a lifetime of stewardship.

- [Website](#)
- [Partner News](#)
- [Procedures to Request SCA Interns/Crews](#)
- [Map of SCA Intern/Work Crew Sites](#)
- [Agreement](#)
- [Partner Contact Information](#)
- [Success Stories](#)
- [SCA Public Safety Intern Training](#)

● Social Media Sites:





U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/ SCA Partnership Locations 2003–PRESENT



Internships have included:
 GIS/GPS, Interpretation, Wildlife Habitat Improvement, Visitor Services, Volunteer Coordination, Trail Work, Natural Resource Management, Invasive Plant Management

High School Crews have included:
 Trail Reconstruction / Maintenance, Campsite Construction, Revegetation, Invasive Plant Removal

For more information, please contact:

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U.S. ARMY

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Questions?



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Other Partnership/Volunteer Updates

- ER/EP 1130-2-500 Chapter 11, Contributions Program: Consolidating ER/EP and 2008 Contributions, Fundraising and Recognition Guide into an updated EC to address changes
- Need updates to Chapters 9, 10, 12 for cooperating associations, volunteers, and challenge partnerships and new chapter for challenge cost sharing cooperative management
- Upcoming IG audit of partnerships program
- Corporate matching/volunteer program information coming out soon
- PROSPECT classes: Virtual, May 3-7; Willamette Valley, Sep 13-16; NAP, Oct 25-28; Allatoona, May 2-5, 2022; NWS, Aug 8-11, 2022
- Enduring Service Award- Corps Foundation making selections by end of Feb
- National MOUs: Pursuing with Outdoor Alliance, YMCA, Ruffed Grouse, Trout Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Scouts
- Webinars: LNT intro Feb 18, LNT Youth Educator Feb 24, LNT Effective Communication Mar 16



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