

## Episcopal Service Corps Program Criteria

### Service

- Corps members commit to serve 32-40 hours/week in organizations working toward community justice and equity, with accountability and supervisory capacity appropriate to ensuring the corps member has a positive experience. Typically these are 501c3's, government agencies, or church-related ministries. Some programs coordinate with AmeriCorps.
- Service sites are recruited and screened to ensure the environment and role is appropriate to a successful experience for the corps member. This includes the following:
  - a minimum of one hour of direct supervision each week
  - At least 1 FTE permanent staff member
  - Evaluation system that allows for a minimum of 2 reviews over the course of the service year
- Programs should enter into contracts with service sites on an annual basis.

### Justice

- Episcopal Service Corps member programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, height, weight, physical or mental ability, veteran status, military obligations, and marital status.

### Formation

- Programs regularly facilitate the spiritual formation of corps members grounded in the common practices of the Episcopal tradition as well as other faith traditions and following the Faith Formation Formula of education/information + worship/practice.
  - This includes at least 6 hours/month of organized formation opportunities and at least two annual program retreats, one of which may be regionally based.
- Programs provide vocational discernment and leadership development opportunities intended to prepare the corps member for the future.

### Community

- Program must be residential and start the year with a minimum number of 3 corps members.
- Corps members are typically 21-30 years old, though select local programs may welcome corps members as young as 18 and older than 30.
- Programs facilitate the establishment of a Rule of Life that includes shared household responsibilities, regular shared meals, regular house meetings, and mutually-established community expectations that incorporate the program's baseline requirements.

### Leadership

- Program leadership are responsible for property management, site cultivation, member recruitment, ESC network participation, formation program development, budgeting, fundraising, faith community outreach, communications and supporting corps members by providing crisis management and pastoral care as needed.
- Programs are encouraged to have a minimum of one FTE or the equivalent in order to undertake these responsibilities.
- Programs must meet governance requirements as established by their organizing documentation and legal status.
- DFMS maintains an [ESC Coordinator](#) to support and convene the network, act as a primary point of contact, and to facilitate connections between the ESC network and other networks in the Episcopal Church and in the young adult communities.

## Network

- Programs regularly engage with the wider ESC network and regional structures, including the [ESC Advisory Council](#) and [Working Groups](#).
- Program Directors must sign and are subject to the [Program Director Covenant](#), which is incorporated as an addendum to this document.

## Best Practices

- It's important for programs to have reliable and sustainable funding. A 3-year budget is requested with application to the ESC network.
- Programs must offer health insurance or medicaid coverage for corps members and staff. Ideally, programs will also offer Employee Assistance Program coverage.
- ESC programs have a wide variety of housing and incorporation entities. In every case, the programs need to have contractual coverage reviewed by an attorney or the diocesan chancellor to ensure housing is stable and safe for members.
- Every program must carry insurance that meets state and local requirements. This may include property, liability, board, and worker's compensation insurance.
- Programs must meet state and local safety regulations, including occupancy standards. An initial safety inspection is highly recommended before opening.
- The language we use to describe corps members and service situations is important. *An HR addendum is in development.*
- Programs and corps members must enter into an attorney-reviewed contractual agreement outlining at a minimum program expectations, benefits, service requirements, and dismissal/termination notification and procedures.
- Programs need to have an up-to-date Corps Member Handbook that is distributed and signed each incoming corps member.
- All leadership and participants must be trained and certified in Safeguarding God's Children. If you are unclear about who needs to be trained, call your diocesan Safe Church coordinator.
- Every program must have a grievance policy with an identified whistleblower contact outside the organizational structure.
- For a variety of reasons, an ESC program may need to take a 12-month Sabbath Year. Programs in their first 3 years are ineligible for Sabbath Year. See [Sabbath Year Procedures](#) document for details.

Documents included as Addendums to these criteria are:

- Advisory Council Norms, Functions, Meetings
- Program Director Covenant
- ESC Coordinator at DFMS
- Working Groups
- Sabbath Year Procedures
- Human Resources Addendum (in development)

## Accountability:

Membership in the ESC network is a privilege based on the covenant created and maintained between ESC Programs. Programs not meeting these criteria and the criteria outlined in the Addendums will be removed from the ESC network by remaining ESC Programs until compliance is reached.