student conservation association

Internship Handbook

Revised November 2026



student conservation association

Congratulations!

I am pleased to welcome you as an SCA Conservation Intern! Based on reports from the thousands of interns who have served before you, you can expect to have a rewarding experience, full of personal and professional growth. Equally important, you will be making a vital contribution to the conservation efforts in the area in which you will be working.

This manual will help you prepare for your new position. In addition, there are enrollment forms that must be completed and returned prior to the start of your internship. SCA assigns the highest priority to your safety. Please read the safety advisories in this manual. Take full advantage of training opportunities you will receive from professional agency staff and always follow the safety guidelines and instructions provided by your supervisor.

Lastly, please recognize that you may be exposed to serious injury when pursuing recreational opportunities during off-duty hours. Safety awareness and practices should extend to leisure time activities in addition to your professional responsibilities.

Let us welcome you personally into the SCA family. If you have any questions or problems during your internship, please do not hesitate to contact your SCA Advisor.

SCA - Who We Are

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America's conservation corps. Our members protect, restore, and interpret public lands; and serve in national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges, as well as with state, local, and non-governmental agencies in all 50 states and various US territories.

SCA collaborates with partners to provide high school, college, and adult members with hands-on service opportunities. We are truly building the next generation of conservation leaders.

Mission Statement

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

SCA Conservation Internships

SCA Conservation Interns are nationally recruited by SCA (or locally recruited by our partners) to match the position requirements established by our partners. Interns can serve at any time of year for durations lasting eight weeks to 12 months. Partners provide funding, challenging and enriching positions, training and direct supervision, professional development opportunities, housing (or cost of housing), on-the-job transportation, performance evaluations, and safe workspaces. Internship opportunities exist in every facet of land management and conservation stewardship.

Public Land Corps Hiring Authority Policy

SCA's agreements with federal land management agencies are typically awarded under the Public Land Corps (PLC) Act (16 USC § 1723). According to this Act, participants must be between the ages of 16 and 30 or veterans aged 35 or younger. Additionally, participants must be citizens or nationals of the United States, or lawful permanent residents.

Failure to adhere to these age requirements may result in SCA being in violation of the statute, rendering the costs incurred for non-compliant participants unallowable.

Friends Groups are NOT PLC eligible.

SCA will do all we can to screen participants for compliance. However, we unfortunately need to separate anyone who we find to be out of compliance.

Table of Contents

Have a conversation with your Host 5

Complete and Sign All Enrollment Forms 6

Complete the Background Check Request Form 6

Plan Your Travel 8

Reimbursements 9

SCA Time Sheets 9

Time Off Policy 12

What is an Output Log? 12

Changes to Dates of Service 13

Service Interruption 13

Know How Your SCA Advisor Can Help You 13

You Arrive & Meet Your Host 14

SCA Allowances 15

SCA Uniforms 18

Internship Housing 19

Prepare for Emergencies 20

Important Compliance Policies: 20

Steps to Take: Emergency or Injury 22

Steps to Take: Non-Emergency or Injury 22

Steps to Take: After an Injury or Incident 22

Health Insurance Basics 23

Workers' Compensation 24

SCA AmeriCorps 26

Conflict Resolution 28

Getting to Work 29

Expand Your Conservation Ethic 29

Build Your Project Management Skills 30

Wrapping Up Your Service 32

Heading Home 33

Have a conversation with your Host

Learn more about what to expect in your upcoming experience, as well as to show the site that you are proactive, professional, and committed to being successful in your position.

- Discuss your arrival at the site.
- Confirm when and where you should report for duty.
- Confirm your start and end dates of your position.
- Learn about your position: is there special gear you need to bring or that will be provided? If housing is provided do you need to bring linens or dishware?
- Is there a grocery store/bank/laundromat/etc. nearby?
- ***Full time interns are expected to work averaging 40 hours per week, unless noted otherwise in the agreement. Part time interns are expected to work averaging 20 hours per week, unless noted otherwise in the agreement.***
- Sometimes your schedule might include working on weekends and/or outside normal business hours due to the nature of the position
- Think about any obligations (going back to school, sports obligations, personal time off) you have that may interfere with the duration of your internship. **Discuss these items up front with your site supervisor and SCA Advisor**.

If there has been a change in your weekly service hours schedule notify your SCA Advisor immediately.

If you are planning on leaving the field early/prior to end date, notify your SCA Advisor immediately.

Handy Lingo

Host Site/Site: The organization that you will be working with directly. SCA host sites can be nonprofits, government agencies or even corporations.

Host: The person at the site who is working directly with the SCA to make your internship happen.

Site Supervisor: The person who will work with you on a day-to-day basis, outline your tasks and verify your time sheets

Complete and Sign All Enrollment Forms

Sign up for Direct Deposit

You will receive an email to register your account in ADP. Please expect an email from noreply@adp.com concerning this and complete your information, including setting up direct deposit, updating tax withholdings, and ensuring your primary address and contact information are correct, as soon as possible after receiving the registration email. Detailed instructions on how to sign up for direct deposit will be available in ADP.

Please note that it is crucial to have your primary address updated correctly in ADP to ensure the timely receipt of any paper checks and other communications. If you have not received your ADP setup email within 14 days of your start date, please reach out for assistance by emailing ADPhelp@thesca.org. The subject of the ADP registration email is "Welcome to ADP".

- **Instructions for Tax setup and Direct Deposit:** Once you receive your ADP setup and complete your onboarding, you will access the ADP App Home Screen.
- **To update your Direct Deposit,** click Pay > Direct Deposit > Manage Direct Deposit
- **To update your Tax Withholdings,** click Pay > Tax Withholding > Federal and State as Applicable. Should you have questions or are unable to edit these sections email ADPhelp@thesca.org

Complete the Background Check Request Form

Shortly after accepting your position, you should receive an email from SCA's Human Resources Department (hrdocs@thesca.org) with information about your background check(s). A document will be emailed to you by either Easy Backgrounds or Truescreen (if you are participating in an AmeriCorps program) soon after to get you started on this important compliance item.

Non-AmeriCorps Participants: For Individuals not participating in AmeriCorps, the following checks must be completed through our background check vendor:

- Criminal History Background check going back 7 years (County and Multijurisdictional)
- National Sex Offender Public Website check (NSOPW)
- Motor vehicle Record (MVR) going back 3 years, required for all participants that are 21+ and required to drive for their internship

AmeriCorps Participants: All AmeriCorps members are required to undergo an additional federal background investigation through our AmeriCorps background check vendor, Truescreen. All SCA's AmeriCorps background check vendors meet CNCS requirements. Regardless of their access to vulnerable populations or not, all AmeriCorps members will be required to complete a three-part AmeriCorps check:

1. Criminal History Background check for Resident State and Worked in State (e.g., Position State) (two-state background check)
2. FBI fingerprinting done through our vendor, Fieldprint
3. National Sex Offender Public Website check (NSOPW)
4. MVR if 21+ and required to drive for their internship

Prepare to complete Form I-9 Section 1 and 2

Form I-9 is used by the federal government to verify that you are legally eligible to work in the United States. Upon accepting your position, instructions for completing the I-9 will be emailed to you. Reach out to hrdocs@thesca.org for more information or to submit a help ticket request.

Read and Sign All Other Enrollment Forms

All other required enrollment documents (including AmeriCorps documents, if applicable) will be sent to you in a single email from SCA Enrollment. If something does not match your understanding of the position, please contact your SCA Advisor immediately.

Tips for Completing Your Paperwork



Completing your paperwork right away makes it more likely that you will be able to begin your internship as scheduled, receive your allowances on time, and focus on the more exciting parts of your experience.



A word of caution: *If your paperwork is not complete by one week prior to the start date of your position, your position may be delayed!*

Plan Your Travel

As part of your SCA internship, an internship position may include a round-trip travel allowance to offset the cost of your travel to and from the host site, the specifics of which will be in your position description details.

Travel - You are responsible for booking and paying for your travel to the site. ***SCA will issue you a travel allowance that you will receive on the first pay date following the start of your position.***

Please note that YOU are responsible for booking your travel, so you can decide how you want to use the travel allowance.

Don't forget that this is where your internship experience begins.

- Confirm your start date and arrival details with your host site supervisor, including logistics for accessing your housing if provided by your site.
- Make a packing list (appropriate shoes and clothing for the internship duration).
- If driving, make sure your vehicle is up for the journey before setting off.
- Plan and book your travel as soon as possible.
- Take photos, keep a journal, write a blog.
- SCA will issue you a travel allowance that you will receive on the first date following the start of your position.
- It is your responsibility to arrive at your host site by the start date indicated on your Offer Letter.

Forfeiting your Travel Allowance

If you withdraw from your internship and you booked travel, you will not be provided any reimbursement. If you leave your position before your scheduled end date, you are required to repay half of the travel allowance to SCA. You will be responsible for paying all return travel costs on your own.

Termination from your position

If you are terminated from your position, you may use your travel allowance to return home.

Travel Benefits

Travel allowance amounts are intended for round trip travel costs, so plan accordingly. If your roundtrip travel costs more than the amounts allotted, you will be responsible for that extra cost. If you have money left over, you can keep these extra funds. A reminder that your travel allowance will be taxed, based on the information you provide on your W-4 in Paycom, so please plan accordingly**.**

Reimbursements

Reimbursements will only be approved by the SCA if Duty-Related Travel and Other Reimbursable Expenses are included in the initial position request and as a line item on the estimate. All expenses must be submitted via the SCA Program Reimbursement Form. Please note that interns must provide a receipt as proof of expense when requesting reimbursement. Reimbursement requests must be submitted and approved no later than the preceding Friday of the pay week, to be disbursed on the following Friday.

The current reimbursement process is as follows.

1. The intern should discuss the reimbursement with their supervisor to ensure funds are available and that the supervisor approves of the expense prior to submitting.
2. The intern will upload receipts and put the reimbursement request into the SCA Program Reimbursement Form. The intern will then notify their supervisor about reimbursement submission.
3. The supervisor will email the SCA Advisor (National Program Coordinator) with the intern's name and the total dollar amount that is approved.
4. The Program contact will process the reimbursement for the next pay period after approval by the supervisor.

SCA Time Sheets

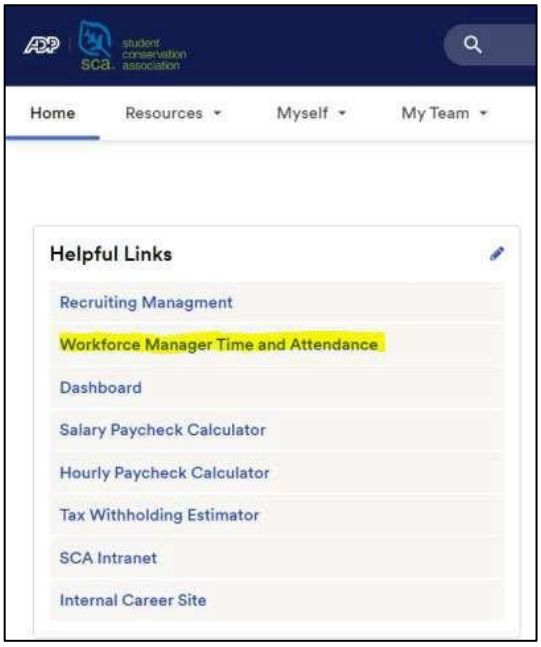
How do I do my time sheet?

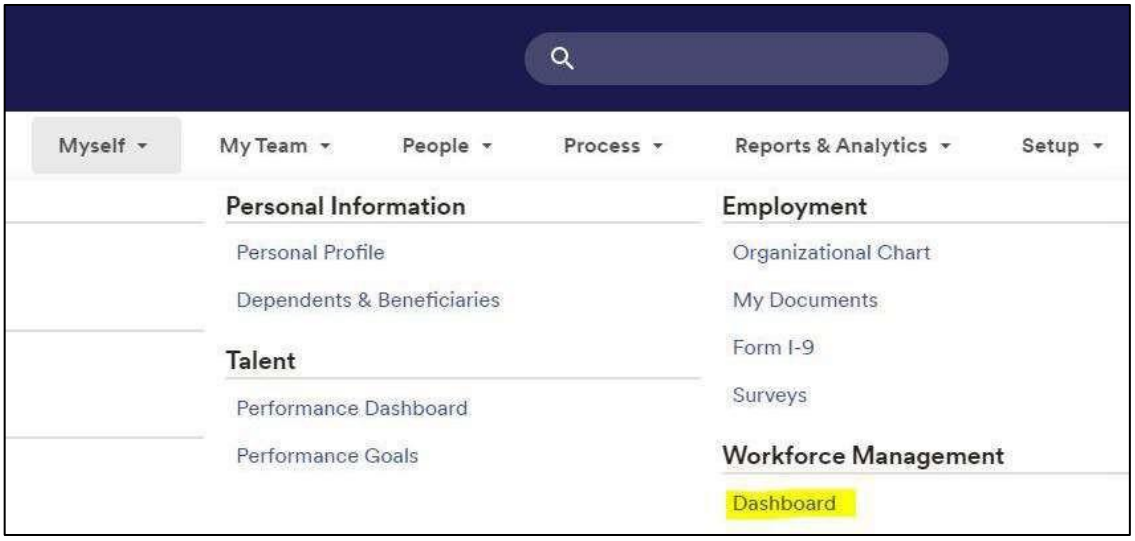
Interns are expected to complete their time sheets on a weekly basis. If access to technology is severely limited, you should discuss the situation with your SCA Advisor as soon as possible. Your SCA Advisor can share critical information about the rules surrounding time sheet submission and interim approved processes.

Full time interns are expected to work averaging 40 hours per week, unless noted otherwise in the agreement. Part time interns are expected to work averaging 20 hours per week, unless noted otherwise in the agreement.

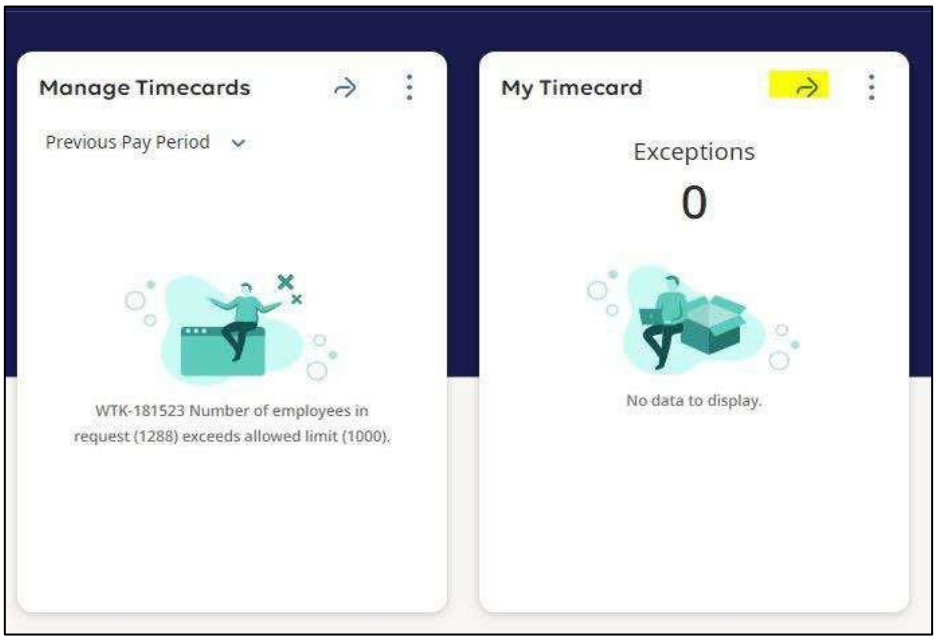
Video: time card tutorial 2.mp4

1. **To access Workforce Manager from the Web Browser either**
   a. Click Workforce Manager Time and Attendance under Helpful Links (see image 1) or
   b. Navigate through the Menus Myself > Workforce Management > Dashboard (see image 2)





2. **Once in Workforce Manager, you enter time by clicking the arrow next to 'My Timecard' (see image)**



3. **You are now on the current timecard. To enter your daily worked time, use one of the following methods:**

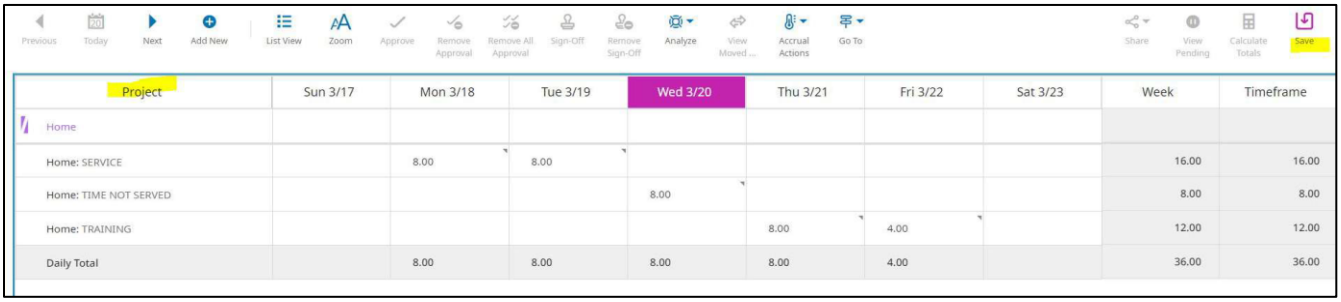
   Members Receiving a Living Allowance (See image 5): If you enter total hours worked per day as a member who receives a set living allowance. Each day must have an entry of either Home or Training

   a. Click in the box below each day worked and enter total hours (ex: 8.00). Use the proper row that aligns with the type of hours as named in the Project column:

      - Home: Hours performing non-training service-related tasks. Hours count toward total hours.
      - Training: Hours participating in service-related training. Hours count toward total hours.

   b. Add Notes about what you did using the instructions below.

   c. Click *Save* in the top right-hand corner when hours have been entered.



Project	Sun 3/17	Mon 3/18	Tue 3/19	Wed 3/20	Thu 3/21	Fri 3/22	Sat 3/23	Week	Timeframe
Home									
Home: SERVICE		8.00	8.00					16.00	16.00
Home: TIME NOT SERVED				8.00				8.00	8.00
Home: TRAINING					8.00	4.00		12.00	12.00
Daily Total		8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	4.00		36.00	36.00

Time Off Policy

Members are expected to serve the minimum number of service hours within a living allowance payment period. Regular attendance is an essential aspect of every position. The program expects members to be on time and at their service site every scheduled day. When a member cannot avoid being late or are unable to serve as expected, they should notify their Site Supervisor.

Poor attendance is characterized by unacceptable patterns of absences, excessive time off, or tardiness. One's attendance record can affect eligibility. Those who have poor attendance, are frequently late to service, abuse breaks and meal periods, or have unapproved absences may lose eligibility for the program. They may also be suspended and/or released from the program.

Any vacation or time-off requests must be approved by the Site Supervisor and forwarded to the SCA Advisor.

Members must also notify the Site Supervisor if they will not report to their service site due to illness. Members are responsible for making up time lost from leave or illness to achieve their service hours.

At times you may be asked to serve on a Federal Holiday. You will be notified by your Site Supervisor if you will provide service on a Holiday.

Members are not guaranteed time-off. Members may submit a Time-Off Request to the Site Supervisor for approval. At the discretion of the Site Supervisor time-off requests will be approved or denied. The Site Supervisor will consider factors such as a member's progress towards completing their service hours and the potential impact the member's absence will have on program operations when determining whether or not to approve time off.

If a member is out sick or has a planned sick leave absence for more than one week, the member should speak to their Site Supervisor and the SCA Advisor to discuss the option of suspending their term until they have made a full recovery.

Any member who is deemed to be abusing the use of time off, thereby causing detrimental effects to the organization, is subject to disciplinary measures.

What is an Output Log?

All SCA programs involve some type of service to communities, partners, and the land. **Output Logs** are how SCA collects information about the projects you complete during your term of service.

It is critical that you submit accurate, complete output logs for your program. This information helps us tell the story of SCA's collective, nationwide impact and report our successes to the partners and funders that make SCA programs possible. **Emails containing output log links will be sent to interns biweekly.**

Submit an output log for each project completed. Create as many output logs as necessary to accurately capture your service accomplishments.

For discreet projects (ex. building a bridge) submit an output log each time you complete a project. For ongoing projects (ex. visitor outreach & education) submit an output log draft **every two weeks**.

If you are working on the same project with other SCA interns, only one of you will need to complete an Output Log for each group accomplishment. The output log training video can be found in LearnUpon as part of the Tracking Accomplishments course in the Intern Academy and Leader & Member Training portals.

Changes to Dates of Service

If the dates of the internship change for any reason, let your SCA contacts know immediately. It is vitally important for SCA to have this information as soon as possible so that we can adjust the payroll and other paperwork and ensure the position still falls within the terms of the agreement.

Date changes also can affect the AmeriCorps award, resulting in a downgrade or entire loss of award funds. Withdrawals and Early Exits In the event an intern does not arrive at the agreed upon time, declines a position after accepting it, or leaves the position early, please notify your SCA contacts immediately.

Service Interruption

Service interruptions enable the intern to be out of the field without accruing billable expenses. Service interruption cases include but are not limited to:

- A member leaving the site for a long time (one week or more).
- Government shutdown
- If a member is called up to active-duty fire status.

Please keep in mind that during a service interruption a member will not receive allowances and will not be eligible for workers' compensation. When an intern can return to the field, your SCA Program contact should be notified before the intern resumes the internship.

Know How Your SCA Advisor Can Help You

SCA Advisor can help you with a variety of issues, including but not limited to the following.

Pre-Internship Logistics, including:

- Changes to your internship position dates
- Background Checks updates
- Form I-9 updates
- Enrollment paperwork updates
- Travel allowance
- AmeriCorps (if applicable)
- Your ADP Workforce account

Questions and Concerns during Your Internship Related To:

- Health Insurance and Workers' Compensation
- Incident Reporting
- Sharing success stories, Highlights, Photo Content
- Reimbursements
- Service Interruptions (if you miss 5 consecutive days of work)
- Changes to your position dates
- Challenges with your host, site supervisor, or other colleagues
- Living, commuting, and housing allowances
- Direct Deposit

- Time Sheets and Output Logs
- Your ADP Workforce account

End of Internship Transition, including:

- Exit paperwork
- Final time sheets and output logs
- Your ADP Workforce account

Who is my SCA Advisor?

When you accepted the offer, a SCA Advisor was assigned to you based on position location. Your SCA Advisor will reach out to you prior to the start of your internship.

How can I reach my Contact?

SCA Advisors are available to help during regular business hours. You should be able to reach out via email or phone directly.

Will I always have the same SCA Contact?

You will have the same SCA Advisor throughout the duration of your internship and for the 30 days following the end of your position. If you serve with SCA again in the future, you will be assigned to an Advisor for the region in which the new position is located. When you are not currently in an internship, the whole SCA team will be available to support you.

You Arrive & Meet Your Host

Most likely, you will work with many different people during your internship, but one person will take the lead and guide your experience. Having a conversation with this person early on to share your mutual goals and expectations can help you to build trust and increase the chances of a successful internship.

Some topics and questions to consider:

Ask about their expectations for you.

- Project goals
- Daily schedule
- Sick day protocol
- Site rules and regulations
- Attire (clothing, protective gear, shoes, etc.)
- Personal and professional use of the internet, telephone, and your cell phone.

Share your goals for the internship.

- What skills and knowledge do you want to develop?
- How does this internship fit into your long-term goals?
- What types of resources, support, etc. would help you to meet your goals?

Prepare for emergencies.

Ask where you can find:

- Fire extinguishers
- First aid kitsPhones
- Other emergency equipment
- Ensure you and your supervisor have SCA's Intern Emergency Number: **571.895.1799**
- Where is the nearest hospital or urgent care center?
- Where is the nearest walk-in clinic for non-emergency medical visits?

Make small talk matter.

- How did they get where they are?
- What do they like best about their job?
- What's the coolest thing about your site?

Take Care of Logistical Details

Taking some time now to get organized can help ensure that you spend the rest of your internship focusing on new skills, new people, and the beautiful place where you are serving.

- Within your first 30 days: Receive your SCA Uniform at host site
- Within your first 30 days: Inspect your housing (if provided)
- Within your first 30 days: Receive AmeriCorps info by email (if eligible)
- Within your first 30 days: Receive Health Insurance enrollment confirmation (if eligible)

SCA Allowances

Thank you for your commitment to learn, grow, and serve your site and the mission of conservation. Your living allowance should help cover some of your basic expenses while you do this good work.



How do I receive my pay?

You will receive an email to register your account in ADP**. Please expect an email from noreply@adp.com concerning this and complete your information, including setting up direct deposit, updating tax withholdings, and ensuring your primary address and contact information are correct, as soon as possible after receiving the registration email.** Detailed instructions on how to sign up for direct deposit will be available in ADP.

Please note that it is crucial to have your primary address updated correctly in ADP to ensure the timely receipt of any paper checks and other communications. If you have not received your ADP setup email within 14 days of your start date, please reach out for assistance by emailing ADPhelp@thesca.org.

Here is some additional information:

The subject of the ADP registration email is “Welcome to ADP”.

Instructions for Tax setup and Direct Deposit: Once you receive your ADP setup and complete your onboarding, you will access the ADP App Home Screen.

- To update your Direct Deposit, click Pay > Direct Deposit > Manager Direct Deposit
- To update your Tax Withholdings, click Pay > Tax Withholding > Federal and State as Applicable.

Should you have questions or are unable to edit these sections email ADPhelp@thesca.org

Withholdings

Make sure your W-4 tax information is correct. Verify your exemptions and address information right away. Lived in state and worked in states need to be correct for tax purposes. Please keep your ADP info on hand after your position ends, the SCA will upload your year-end tax info directly into your ADP portal in January of the following year.

How much will I receive for my allowances?

Allowances are determined by your host site and solidified prior to the position being advertised. It is expected that you confirmed the benefits of your specific position with your host site prior to accepting the position. With few exceptions, all positions come with travel allowances. Standard living allowances are based on the length of your internship. The living allowance for your position will be listed on the Confirmation of Acceptance letter that you receive with your enrollment paperwork.

Allowances are intended to cover basic expenses during a service opportunity and should not be considered the equivalent of a salary. Plan to bring funds for emergencies and expenses beyond your basic needs.

Are my allowances taxed?

Yes. You will have federal and, where applicable, state and local taxes withheld from your allowances. The number of exemptions you claim on your W-4 form also determines the amount of tax that is withheld.

Do I get paid days off?

Your allowances are distributed evenly throughout your term of service. You are paid in weekly (or monthly, in the case of housing) increments rather than daily. It does not go up or down if you are out sick for a day or if you serve extra hours.

When will I receive my living allowance?

Each pay day reflects earnings from the two weeks prior to the week on which the pay day falls. See the calendar below and following along with this example:

On 1/19, interns are paid for service for the weeks beginning 1/1 and 1/8. During the pay day week, time sheets are verified and approved to confirm you have worked and that you are following SCA timekeeping regulation. If you begin your service during a pay day week, you will receive your first bi-weekly living allowance three weeks after you start. Example: You start 1/1. You receive pay for the weeks of 1/1 and 1/8 on 1/19.

If you begin your service during a non-pay day week, you will receive your first living allowance two weeks after your start date and it will reflect one week of earnings. You will receive two weeks' worth of earnings every pay day thereafter. Example: You start 1/ 8. You receive pay for the week of 1/8 on 1/19. You receive pay for the weeks of 1/15 and 1/22 on 2/2 and so forth. **Your final payment will be dispersed on the pay day following the end of your internship.**

Who can I talk to about allowance questions?

Your SCA Advisor can help you with most questions related to your allowances, including:
Your allowance amounts (note: amounts are set by your site at the time of position setup and disbursed by SCA over the course of the internship).

SCA's Payroll department (payrollsca@thesca.org) can help you with most questions related to:
direct deposit, missed payments, and payment schedules.

SCA's HR department (HRdocs@thesca.org) can help you with questions related to: Proof of Income

Your host site supervisor can help you with questions about your work schedule, days off, and sick days.

SCA Uniforms

Here's your chance to represent yourself, your site, the SCA, and AmeriCorps.



Your SCA Uniform Package will include a combination of:

- SCA Shirts (long and short sleeved)
- SCA Hat
- SCA Bandana
- SCA Water Bottle
- SCA Stickers
- SCA Name Tag

If you are serving in an extreme weather area, you may receive additional weather-appropriate gear. Note that specific uniform packages are selected by your host site at the time the position was created.

Enrolled in AmeriCorps? Your package will include items with the AmeriCorps logo.

When will I receive my uniform?

Your uniform will be shipped directly to the site and should be there when you arrive. Your uniform may arrive in multiple packages, and during periods of high volume, it may arrive shortly after you do.

Wrong size? Missing Items? Didn't receive your uniform?

If you have questions about your uniform and you haven't started your internship yet, get in touch with your SCA Advisor. If you receive your uniform and something is too small or is missing, or if you've been at your site for 2 weeks and have not yet received your uniform, follow these steps:

Please Note: A larger size or a similar item may be substituted based on availability.

- For questions or instructions for returns/exchanges contact Arborwear Customer Service at: (888) 578TREE (8733) or info@arborwear.com
- Tell the Arborwear team:
  - Which items are wrong or missing.
  - What you need instead and the best address to which they should ship new items.
- You won't have to pay shipping!

When should I wear my uniform?

Ask your host site supervisor for specifics about when and where to wear your uniform. In general, wear your uniform anytime that you are working. Be proud and represent!

Internship Housing

Settle in and make yourself at home. If you are living at home or are in an internship where housing is not provided, feel free to skip this section.

Pet Policy

To avoid potential health risks and damage to property, it is SCA's policy that pets are not to be kept in SCA-leased housing. When housing is provided by the partner, or if housing is not leased by SCA, the intern must obtain written permission from the partner and/or landlord. SCA will not be responsible for any pet-related damages.

Inspect Your Housing



As an SCA intern, you may find yourself living in anything from a tent to a house, but there are some things you can expect to be the same for all SCA internship housing.
Use the list below to inspect your housing. Does it have:

- A safe location
- Access to showers and toilets
- Cell phone service, phone, or two-way radio
- Minimal furnishings including a bed, table, and chairs (unless camping)
- Basic cleanliness and good repair
- Heating during cold weather
- A place to cook food
- Single sex sleeping quarters (unless you've agreed to other arrangements)

How does my rent get paid?

- By SCA: In most cases, your housing will be taken care of by the SCA and your site.
- By You: You should know already if you are in this situation! You will receive your housing allowance by the first of each month to make your housing payments. As you are determining what rent you can afford, keep in mind that housing allowances are taxed.

Housing Issues?

Use the list below to decide who to call.

- Issues with heating, plumbing, roof, etc.? Talk to landlord* and SCA Advisor**
- Conflicts with housemates? Use the Conflict Resolution Tools in this handbook. Talk to Site Supervisor and SCA Advisor.
- Housing Allowance Question? Talk to SCA Advisor.

**If you live on site, talk to your site supervisor or maintenance staff.*

*** If you signed the lease for your housing (instead of SCA), you only need to contact your landlord about these issues, but you can always get help from your SCA Advisor if you need it.*

Prepare for Emergencies



SCA and your host have developed policies, processes, and tools to support a safe service workspace. However, ultimately, safety is up to you. You will be making decisions daily that affect your safety.

SCA's 24-Hours Intern Emergency Line: 571-895-1799

By taking the steps listed below and becoming familiar with the resources on this page, you can reduce your risk and be ready to deal with emergencies if they occur.

Things to do in your first seven days:

Talk to your site supervisor about the following topics.

- Emergency policies and procedures
- Protective equipment
- Evacuation Plans
- Other questions that you have about safety.



Become familiar with your site's emergency response plan (ERP).

- If your site doesn't have an ERP already, create your own.
    - Emergency phone numbers
    - Directions to the nearest medical facilities
- Put a copy of the ERP in your first aid kit, vehicle, living and workspaces.
- Put SCA's 24-Hr Intern Emergency Number into your phone: **571-895-1799.**

Intolerance of harassment, abuse, and assault

SCA does not tolerate harassment or abuse of any sort on our members, and we rely on our agency partners to provide workplace and housing spaces that actively identify and manage hazards and risks. Harassment or discrimination or any member/intern on account of sex, age, race, national origin, religion, physical or mental ability, material status, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

If any instances of harassment or abuse are suspected or have been reported, please alert SCA via normal incident reporting channels such as contacting us at 571-895-1799.

Important Compliance Policies:

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Substance Use

Members/Interns will not use, possess, sell, trade, and/or offer for sale illegal drugs, or intoxicants. They may choose to consume alcohol after work hours and off program time during their term of service with SCA.

SCA understands that adults of legal drinking age may choose to consume alcohol after work hours and off program time during their term of service. Alcohol use on SCA programs is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked or limited at any time for safety or management reasons. Alcohol will not be:

1. Consumed by personnel under 21 years of age.
2. Used when prohibited by partner, local programs, or facility policy.
3. Used if use infringes on the experiences of others.
4. Used if it negatively affects performance.
5. Used during work hours.
6. Influencing drivers during SCA vehicle operations.

Regardless of state or local laws, members/interns will not use, inhale, or ingest marijuana on SCA programs, in SCA or partner housing, accommodations, or facilities, or vehicles used for SCA purposes. Exceptions include circumstances in which members/interns are medically prescribed marijuana and cleared as part of pre-program medical screening.

Members/Interns will not use prescription medications for which they are not authorized.

Firearms & Personal Weapons

Members/Interns will not possess, use, or store firearms on their person, property, o SCA property while participating in SCA programming. Exceptions include but are not limited to include pre-approved firearms in bear country.

Members/Interns will not possess, use, or store knives larger than a pocketknife on their person, property, or SCA property while participating in SCA programming.

Socialization

Members/Interns will not participate in exclusive or romantic relationships with SCA staff or SCA partner contacts.

External visitors (i.e., partner personnel, friends, family, acquaintances, etc.) will be pre-approved to visit programming sites and shared or provided, accommodations (e.g. housing, tents) during off-time, overnight, and downtimes (i.e. sleepovers).

Social Media

Members/Interns will not post material or content contradictory or in conflict with SCA statements, messaging, publications, or website.

Unless authorized to do so, members/interns will avoid the appearance of speaking for SCA or SCA's partners.

Steps to Take: Emergency or Injury

Follow the steps below for any emergency or injury that requires immediate support.

- Deal with the immediate threat to life.
- Facilitate first aid and/or evacuation if necessary.
- Call 911 and/or get to nearest medical facility, if necessary.
- Communicate with your site supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Call your SCA Contact during regular business hours, or 571-895-1799 if your SCA Advisor is not reachable or it is after hours.

If you visit a medical facility, provide your insurance card, or, if the injury occurred while performing service tasks during work hours, tell the health care provider that this will be a workers' compensation claim.

Steps to Take: Non-Emergency or Injury

Follow these steps for incidents or injuries that do not require immediate support.

- Facilitate first aid and/or evacuation if necessary.
- Communicate with your site supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Contact your SCA Contact during regular business hours for additional support as needed

If a medical facility is visited, provide your insurance card, or, if the injury occurred while performing service tasks during work hours, tell the health care provider that this will be a Workers' Compensation claim.

Steps to Take: After an Injury or Incident

Follow these steps as appropriate within one day of an incident.

1. Call your SCA Advisor within 24 hours and report the incident. If SCA offices will not be open, then you can call **SCA's 24-hour Intern Emergency Hotline 571.895.1799**
2. Request ongoing support and provide information as requested by SCA Advisor to complete an incident report.
3. Discuss any potential impacts that the incident may have on your internship (work restrictions from your doctor, missed service hours, unresolved interpersonal/ professional issues, etc.)

Communicate with your site supervisor: report the incident within 24 hours, follow up about the status of the situation, and discuss any potential impacts that the incident may have on your internship.

Health Insurance Basics

It can be hard to think clearly when you're sick or injured. Read through this information now and be prepared to get the medical help that you need when you need it.

Things to do in Your First 30 Days



- Receive your insurance documents in an email from SCA
- Print your insurance card and put it in your wallet
- Find a local walk-in health center for nonemergency visits

What to do When You Visit a Health Care Provider



- Bring your insurance card and show it when you check in
- Ask if they will file your insurance claim or if you need to file it directly
- If you need to file a claim, send your bills to Cigna using the addresses below

Is my position eligible for SCA health insurance?



If your position is eligible for health insurance, you will receive enrollment forms with the rest of your SCA paperwork.

Please note: if you are currently enrolled in non-SCA insurance, you will not be eligible for SCA insurance during your internship.

How long will I be covered by SCA insurance?

If your position is eligible and you choose to enroll, you will be covered from the start date of your SCA position to the last day of the month in which your position ends.

* There is no option for extended coverage after your internship ends.

*The maximum length of coverage for one position is 364 days.

What benefits does the SCA health insurance provide?

To view up to date insurance information, including coverage benefits, visit the Cigna Insurance page.

How do I contact the health insurance company?

Cigna Health Plan Hotline: 1-800-244-6224 Web: www.myCigna.com

App: myCigna Mobile App

Do I need a doctor who is in the insurance plan network?

No. You can go to any doctor, urgent care center, or hospital for treatment. However, health providers who are in Cigna's network will automatically file your insurance claims and may give you special discounts.

To find a local health care provider who is in the network:

Call: 1-800-244-6224 or

Visit: www.myCigna.com

What do I do if I still have my insurance card from my last SCA internship?

You will need to print out a new insurance card. Insurance policy information and coverage change frequently, so it is important to ensure that your card is up to date.

Workers' Compensation

If you are injured during service hours while performing job-related tasks, your medical costs may be eligible to be covered in full by Workers' Compensation

How do I use Workers' Compensation?

- Visit a walk-in clinic (non-emergencies) or urgent care/emergency room (emergencies)
- Tell the health care provider that this will be a Workers Compensation claim and that you work for the SCA
- If requested, provide the contact information for SCA's Human Resources Coordinator:

  Human Resources Department
  HRDocs@thesca.org
  (603) 504-3201

- Contact your SCA Contact **within 24 hours** to provide:



  - Name and contact info of the health care provider
  - Details of the incident/injury
  - If SCA offices are closed, use SCA's 24 hours intern emergency line to report the incident: 571-895-1799

- Your contact will complete a Workers Compensation Report using the information that you provide.
- SCA will generate a Workers Compensation claim number and email it to you.
- SCA will also provide the Workers Compensation claim number to the health care provider so that they can submit your claim for payment.
- The Workers Compensation company will determine whether your claim will qualify as a claim.

If it qualifies, your bill will be paid. If it does not qualify, you will be informed vy the Workers' Compensation company and will have the option to submit your claim for insurance coverage through your personal or SCA health insurance.

What if I get a medical bill?



If you receive a bill, it means that something went wrong with your Workers Compensation claim and no one is currently paying the bill. You need to act right away to make sure that the unpaid bill does not affect your credit.

<u>Follow the steps below if you receive a medical bill:</u>

If you received a Workers Compensation claim number:

- Call the phone number on the bill, tell them that the costs should have been submitted as a Workers Compensation claim, and provide them with the Workers Compensation claim number.

If you did not receive a Workers Compensation claim number:

- Call your SCA Advisor or site supervisor and let them know that your Workers Compensation claim did not go through properly and needs to be resubmitted.

What if I get injured during service work, but don't need medical attention?

It is in your best interest to report all work-related injuries/incidents to the SCA within 24 hours. Reporting minor injuries when they happen makes it more likely that you will be eligible for Workers Compensation coverage if the injury develops into something more serious.



Tick bites provide a great example of why minor injuries should be reported right away. While an embedded tick is a minor incident, tick bites have the potential to lead to Lyme disease. If you do not report the tick bite when it happens, you may not be eligible for Workers Compensation to cover Lyme disease or other complications that may develop as a result of the bite.

What you should know about Workers' Compensation

You need to report Workers Compensation incidents within 24 Hours



SCA must be informed of Workers Compensation claims within 24 hours or may not be able to submit your claim. During business hours, call your SCA Contact for assistance filing a claim. If you need to report an incident when SCA offices are closed, use SCA's 24-hours intern emergency line: **571-895-1799**



Workers' Compensation is not guaranteed
SCA's insurance company has the final say whether a claim meets the Workers Compensation eligibility criteria. If your claim is denied, you will be able to submit it as an insurance claim through your personal or SCA health insurance.

SCA AmeriCorps

Congratulations on your choice to participate in the SCA as an AmeriCorps member.
To learn more about the AmeriCorps Education Award, visit this page:
https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-americorps-education-award

Receive your AmeriCorps enrollment confirmation email

It can take the SCA up to 30 days after your start date to process your AmeriCorps enrollment.
Once you are fully enrolled you will receive a confirmation email from the SCA.

You will not be able to put student loans into forbearance or view your award details in My AmeriCorps until after you receive this email.

Register with My.AmeriCorps.gov

My AmeriCorps is your one stop shop for all things AmeriCorps. Through this website, you will be able to view your award details, put your student loans into forbearance, and use your Education Award.

You will not be able to register with My AmeriCorps until after you receive your AmeriCorps enrollment confirmation email.

Put Eligible Student Loans into Forbearance

If you have qualified student loans, you can place your loans in forbearance during your service. In addition, you are eligible to have the accrued interest paid at the end of your service.
To put your student loans into forbearance, login to My.AmeriCorps.gov and follow the instructions.

You will not be able to put your student loans into forbearance until after you receive your AmeriCorps enrollment confirmation email.

Steps to Complete Your Service in Good Standing

Follow the steps below to make sure that you fulfill the requirements for SCA AmeriCorps throughout your internship and remain eligible for an AmeriCorps Education Award.

1. **Complete your minimum AmeriCorps hours.**

   This number can be found on the SCA AmeriCorps Member Agreement forms that you signed. Your hours must be entered into ADP Workforce and verified and approved on a biweekly basis by you and the site supervisor.

2. **Complete your full term of service.**

   You are required to serve through the scheduled end date, even if you complete your AmeriCorps minimum hours before your end date.

If you leave your internship before your scheduled end date, you risk losing your entire AmeriCorps Education Award. If you have any concerns about your ability to serve through your scheduled end date, get in touch with your SCA Contact immediately.

Connect with your State Service Commission

State Service Commissions are charged with coordinating AmeriCorps service and encouraging volunteering in their states. They often administer special training and events for AmeriCorps members.

To find the State Service Commission in the state where you're service, go to www.americorps.gov and click "Contact Us," then the State Service Commissions link.

Do not engage in activities prohibited by AmeriCorps



AmeriCorps members are prohibited from engaging in the activities listed below while on active duty. If you have concerns that you are being asked to do something that might be prohibited by AmeriCorps, discuss the situation first with your site supervisor, and then with your SCA Advisor as appropriate.

AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities:

- Attempting to influence legislation or election to public office
- Organizing or engaging in boycotts, strikes, petitions or protests
- Assisting or deterring union organizing
- Engaging in any form of religious proselytization
- Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit business, labor union, partisan political organization, or religious organization
- Raising funds for living allowances or for an organization's general operating expenses or endowment
- Writing a grant application to any federal agency
- Collecting fees, selling items, or participating in money-handling duties on behalf of the agency with which you serve
- Abortion services or referrals
- Duplicating or displacing a volunteer or employee at your agency

Do Good Work

Your site supervisor will be completing a mid-term* and end-of-term AmeriCorps evaluation on the quality of your work. The results of these evaluations are taken into account when you are exited from AmeriCorps at the end of your service. *Mid-term evaluations are only required if you're in a 900- or 1700-hr AmeriCorps team.

How do I use my AmeriCorps Education Award?

To apply your AmeriCorps Education Award to eligible expenses, login to My.AmeriCorps.gov. You will be able to apply your award through this site after you have been exited from AmeriCorps, approximately 30 days after your internship ends.

To what expenses can I apply my AmeriCorps Education Award?



Qualified Student Loans: Qualified loans include any loans backed by the federal government Check with your student loan holder to find out if your loan is backed by the federal government.



Current Education Expenses at a Qualified Institution: Qualified institutions are schools that can provide federal financial aid. If a school has a FAFSA code with the US Department of Education, the school is qualified.

Look up your school here: ***College Search | FAFSA Application | Federal Student Aid***

View the AmeriCorps Education Award Tutorial: ***https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-americorps-education-award/find-out-more***

Conflict Resolution



Conflicts are an inevitable part of life, even in positive situations with well-intentioned people. How you respond to conflicts during your internship will have a huge impact on how they affect your experience.

In general, dealing with conflicts early and directly is a good practice. Read below for SCA's general recommendations for dealing with conflict.

- Attempt to settle the problem with the other party on a one-on-one basis.
- Choose a time and place that is comfortable for both parties.
- Be prepared to explain how you define the issue.
- Be prepared to explain what you see as your role in the issue.
- Be prepared to explain what you see as a reasonable solution.

Be prepared to listen and hear the other person's side of the story, including:

- ❖ How they define the issue.
- ❖ What they see as their role in the issue.
- ❖ What they see as a reasonable solution.

If this attempt is unsuccessful, try to settle the problem by involving your site supervisor.

- If involving your site supervisor is unsuccessful, attempt to solve the problem by working with your SCA Advisor. Your SCA Advisor will facilitate conversations between your site supervisor and/or additional SCA staff to assist in moving the issue to resolution.
- If your SCA Advisor is unable to resolve the issue, your SCA Advisor will bring the issue to SCA's National Program Manager -Internships and identify a resolution based on the details of the specific situation.

Getting to Work

Keep Track of Logistical Details

Don't forget the details! Keep track of the basics so that you can give your attention to the important service work that you are doing.

Make a Commitment to Service

Service is an ethic and a skillset. Focusing on building your technical skills and project management abilities can increase your service impact now and in the future.

Be a Leader

Good leadership begins with you. Look here to learn about leadership styles, access conflict resolution tools, and set goals that will make an impact.

Maintain open communication with your site supervisor:

- Address issues directly and immediately (don't put them off)
- Request a sick day if you are feeling ill
- Share your successes and excitement
- Ask questions if you do not understand something
- Discuss potential changes to your schedule
- Bring up safety concerns

Contact SCA to:

- Get support for medical, emotional, or interpersonal issues
- Report incidents
- AmeriCorps and related questions
- Change the supervisor listed on your time sheet and time sheet issues
- Discuss changes to your service start and end dates or an interruption in your service

Expand Your Conservation Ethic

Want to be more effective as a conservationist? Learn the facts, the systems, relationships, and processes that make the plants grow, the planets spin, and the people act.

In essay after essay, we read about SCA applicants whose life changing experiences inspired them to devote themselves to conservation. This heartfelt, gut- based devotion is vital to the future of conservation, but it is only one piece of a well-developed conservation ethic.

Learn all you can!

Whether you are educating the public, collecting data, or managing resources, building your knowledge can increase your impact now and in the future. Learn the mission of your site and the reason behind the mission. Become an expert-in-training: explore the visitor center, read pamphlets and brochures, poke around the website.

Attend interpretive tours, lectures and other programs offered at your site. Prepare a short "elevator speech" about your site and what you are doing. Pick your supervisor's brain. Talk to volunteers, staff and other interns about their knowledge and experiences.

Questions to Ponder:

- ***How does what's happening at your site fit into the bigger picture of conservation?***
- ***Why is what you are doing important?***



- **Liz Putnam** founded the SCA over 50 years ago. Learn about the history of SCA and the impact that one young woman has had on over 70,000 lives (including yours).
- The history of conservation in the US is rich and varied. Learn the roles that artists, explorers, scientists, educators, politicians and so many more played in creating the conservation movement of today. Explore books, websites, and movies to learn more.
- Reflect on your experience. Keep a journal on paper, in photos, in pictures, online… Whatever the format, the key is that you take time to process your experience and learn what it must teach you.

Build Your Project Management Skills

Project management is everything that goes on behind the scenes to make a project successful: defining the project, securing needed people and supplies, managing time and tasks, and taking care of all the logistical details.

In addition, project managers are the people who step back from the day-to-day details to see the big picture. They observe, evaluate, and adjust as needed to make the project a success.

The great thing is that project management skills that you learn in one situation can be applied to all sorts of other situations. The skills you learn now will make you better prepared for whatever path you choose to follow.

Steps you can take to build your project management skills:

- Observe and learn from experienced managers
- Ask questions about why and how things happen
- Volunteer to take charge of small projects

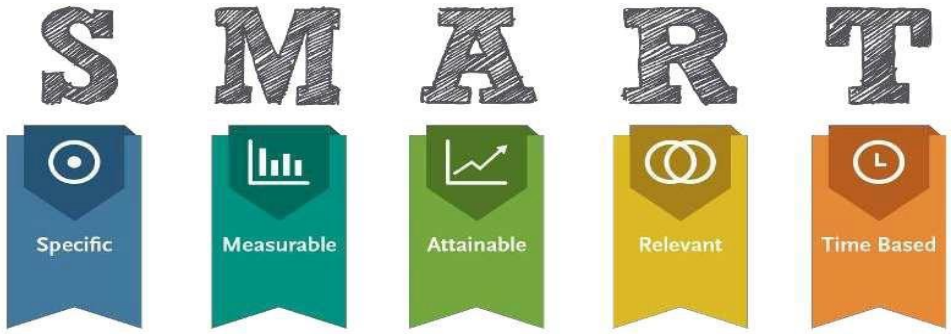
Take the lead in managing your own internship experience:

- Consider the goals that you want to achieve and make decisions based on those goals
- Keep a calendar with important dates and deadlines
- Break down big projects into smaller pieces and create a system for tracking your progress
- Be diligent about tracking your hours and accomplishments through your SCA time sheets
- Ask for feedback and accept it with grace

Have a Plan

Setting goals early can help you to remember your big picture focus.

Make sure that your goals are SMART.



<u>Example of a non-SMART goal:</u>

I want to learn more about conservation.

<u>Example of this goal transformed into a SMART goal:</u>

By the 6th week of my internship (Time-Focused), I want to be able to explain two conservation techniques (Measurable and Results-Focused) used by staff at my site.

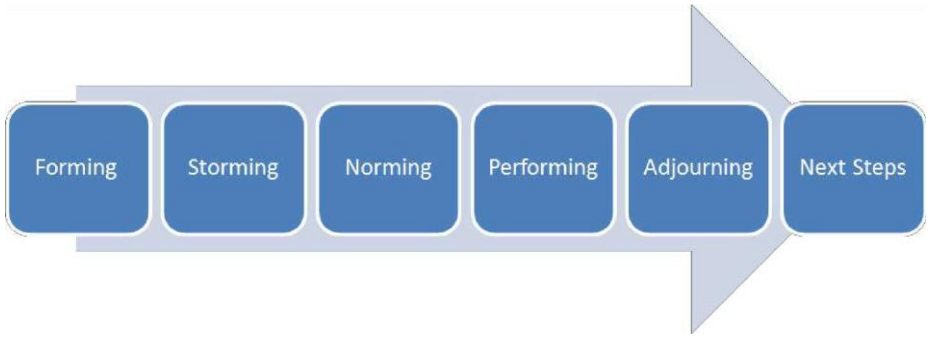
Know Your Group

Understanding how groups function is another important element in leading others.

Being familiar with these stages and understanding what they mean for a group can make it easier to work through challenging times.

Search the internet for "Stages of Group Development" to learn more about the characteristics of each stage.

While the graphic above refers specifically to group development, it might also provide insight into your individual experience as your internship progresses.



Wrapping Up Your Service

Complete Your Final Time Sheet and Output Logs

Complete and submit all time sheets and output logs within one week of your last day. After your position ends, you will be able to view your time sheets in ADP.

Complete your AmeriCorps Exit Paperwork (if applicable): You will be emailed a link to complete the exit form.

Make sure that you will receive your W-2

- SCA will mail your W-2 to you at the end of January
- The W-2 will be mailed to the address listed on your W-4
- If you need it mailed to a different address, contact your SCA Advisor or SCA's Payroll Department (payrollsca@thesca.org). Provide your new address and phone number

Confirm details for your travel home

- Confirm your end date with your supervisor. If this date has changed from the original end date, confirm the change with your SCA Advisor.
- Plan or review the travel plans that YOU arranged previously (plane tickets, train tickets, rides to the airport, etc.).
- Remember, you are responsible for your travel!

Leave Your Housing Better Than You Found It

- Make your housing clean and welcoming for the next person.
- Move out everything that you brought (and anything you acquired during your internship).
- Get rid of all trash and recyclables.
- Do a thorough cleaning (fridge, stove, bathroom, floors, etc.)
- Pick-up the yard and outside living areas.
- Clean and waterproof your tent, repair zippers, etc. (if you camped for your internship).
- See below if you're living in housing leased by the SCA.

Additional instructions for interns living in housing leased by SCA

- If SCA paid rent directly to the landlord, you need to complete the checklist emailed to you at least one week prior to your move-in date. Hang on to the housing check list throughout your internship. You will need to follow check out steps at the end and return the form to SCA's Field Services Manager within one week of moving out.
- Email: abrodeur@thesca.org - Angela Brodeur (SCA Field Services Department)

Heading Home

Just as the trip to your site marked the physical and metaphorical transition to your new position, now your travel home marks a new transition. Take some time to look back as well as forward at this moment of transition.

Some things to consider:

Write thank you letters to people who had a positive impact on your experience.

Prepare to adjust back to your old life

- Do you have different expectations for yourself? For your friends?
- Is your living situation changing drastically?
- Have you changed in ways that your friends and family may not be aware of?

Things to consider:

- Update your resume and be sure to include the soft skills you've gained (e.g. leadership, teamwork, problem solving) as well as the hard skills.
- Ask your site supervisor to write you a letter of recommendation
- Determine if your internship made you eligible for non-competitive hiring with some of our key partner agencies.
- If you are under 30 and served more than 640 with the NPS, FWS, BLM, or USFS, you may be eligible for non- competitive hiring authority through the Public Land Corps Act. Details vary from agency to agency, so ask your site supervisor or someone involved in human resources or youth programs at your site for more information about this opportunity.

