

4o. Public Assistance Program

AmeriCorps Service has varying effects on public assistance programs. It is always important to check current regulations regarding various programs before promising specific benefits to members. The most common public assistance programs that members may have questions about are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance, Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

If the benefits program is federally-funded and is based on need, and is not provided under the Social Security Act (other than SSI), AmeriCorps State and National benefits should not affect an AmeriCorps member's eligibility for such assistance (National Policy FAQ part C). Generally receiving the living allowance does not affect a member's eligibility for federal, need-based housing assistance, such as Section 8 housing and other federally subsidized housing, and SNAP benefits. See the [CNCS Memo Regarding Eligibility](#) for more information about SNAP benefits. AmeriCorps members can lose their TANF benefits when they begin receiving a living allowance because it is funded under SSI. The living allowance amount is taken into account in determining eligibility for TANF benefits.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recognizes that AmeriCorps members, who will receive AmeriCorps healthcare coverage, may be receiving Medicaid coverage also. DHHS has stated that AmeriCorps Medicaid recipients are not waived from AmeriCorps health care coverage. Because Medicaid "wraps around" other available health care coverage, Medicaid will only pick up the costs that are not covered under the primary AmeriCorps policy (National Policy FAQ part C). Medicaid is always a secondary form of coverage when there is another health care policy in place. Members who remain on TANF will continue to receive Medicaid for their dependents. Members who lose TANF due to the living allowance may still qualify for Medicaid or Family Health Plan. For general questions about SSI go to: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/index.htm>