

Civic Action Fellowship FAQ

Q: What if I'm out of school or will be graduating in Fall 2020, and not interested in the Education Award? Can I get that money in cash?

A: No, AmeriCorps members are eligible only for the Education Award. The Education Award will be directly sent to an institution or loan company upon the completion of the Fellowship. However, if a member is 55 years of age or older at the time they start service, they can transfer their Education Award to an eligible child or grandchild.

Q: Why are students being paid below minimum wage?

A: The Civic Action Fellows Program is being funded by the AmeriCorps national initiative administered by California Volunteers, under Governor Gavin Newsom. Thus, we will forward all concerns about funding levels directly to the Governor's Office. Concerns raised are valid and merit response. California Volunteers' efforts are not connected in any way to SJSU's endowment and the students who serve with this effort are not SJSU employees. The funds provided by the grant provide some compensation in the form of stipends and Education Awards and loads of professional development for students to serve in an initiative, that for the past year, students have been implementing with no pay as either volunteers or service-learners. The C.A. Fellows will not be serving as full-time classroom teachers (thus little risk of burn-out, but a great opportunity to help urban kids), but instead, they will be assisting kids to learn coding and STEM leadership curriculum within the context of subsidized after school programs. So, if you want to SERVE kids attending high poverty schools to gain confidence and leadership in coding and STEM careers, this program is a great fit. While it is not, in and of itself, employment by the schools or SJSU, it is a wonderful stepping stone to many career paths.

Q: Can I still apply if I'm not currently an SJSU student, but will be enrolled as a student during the 2020-2021 academic year?

A: You are still eligible to apply for the C.A Fellowship. Make sure you submit proof of future enrollment/acceptance at SJSU as well as an unofficial transcript from your current institution when you apply to the Fellowship. The letter of recommendation can also come from a faculty member of your current school.

Q: I have an F-1 Student Visa, can I still apply for the C.A Fellowship?

A: Unfortunately, the guidelines provided by the AmeriCorps grant indicate that Fellows must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or legal permanent resident aliens of the United States. With an F-1 Student Visa, you are considered a non-resident alien and, therefore, are not eligible at this time to apply to the C.A Fellowship.

Q: I'm not a computer science major and have no experience with coding, can I still apply to be a C.A Fellow?

A: We encourage everyone to apply regardless of their major/background. No experience is required to be a C.A Fellow. Training will be provided.

Q: What if I can't commit to the C.A Fellowship the entire 2020-2021 academic year?

A: The Fellowship is a year long position. You are still eligible to apply; however, preference will be given to those who can commit to the full academic year. If a student wishes to leave the program early, they will no longer be eligible for the Education Award that will be paid upon the completion of the Fellowship.

Q: Can I still apply if I graduate in Fall 2020?

A: You are still eligible to apply; however, preference will be given to those who will be enrolled at SJSU during the 2020-21 academic year. Students must be enrolled at SJSU throughout the full academic year in order to be eligible for the Education Award.

Q: What is the difference between the Education Award and the Living Allowance?

A: The Living Allowance will be paid in monthly installments directly to the Fellow through the SJSU Research Foundation. The Education Award will be directly sent to an institution or loan company upon the completion of the Fellowship. Fellows must complete the entire Fellowship in order to be eligible for the Education Award.

Q: If I still want to be in the Fellowship after I graduate in Fall of 2020, can I still serve as a Fellow while I'm no longer in school?

A: Preference will be given to those who will be enrolled during the full 2020-21 academic year during the application process. However, if you can still commit to the full academic year position then you're eligible to be a Fellow. Students must be enrolled at SJSU throughout the full academic year in order to be eligible for the Education Award.