To host a GRCorps member for 20/21, action is needed by Nov 12, 2019.

What is the GRCorps?
The GRCorps is a team of talented sustainability professionals that was created with the support of a grant from AmeriCorps (though the Serve Illinois program). AmeriCorps supports voluntary service to communities to address a wide variety of community needs. The Mayors Caucus designed this program specifically to help communities address the common sustainability goals of the Greenest Region Compact (GRC).

Our current GRCorps is made up of 12 dynamic college graduates serving GRC communities. They began work alongside municipal staff and civic leaders earlier this month. Our first GRCorps completed service in September of 2019 and have done a remarkable amount of quality work for 8 municipalities and partners. GRCorps members are beginning their careers in sustainability and receive ongoing training and support through the USEPA and the Mayors Caucus.

What work do GRCorps members do?
Most of the GRCorps members are serving their host communities by coordinating sustainability tasks, developing sustainability plans and tracking accomplishments. Some GRCorps members are conducting outreach to residents, managing communication about sustainability, conducting research, and organizing events. Any meaningful work related to the GRC that is important to your community can potentially be done by a GRCorps member.

The AmeriCorps program requires full-time GRCorps members to complete 1,720 of service, including modest requirements for training and additional community service, like on Veterans Day. This equals about 11 months of full-time work. They will be available for full-time service from October 2020 through about September 2021, depending on their pace towards completion of required hours.

We will work together to recruit qualified candidates for all GRCorps host communities and match candidates to the needs of your position. Host communities will make final selection of candidates and provide direct supervision for the full term of service.

What is the cost?
Municipalities are required to share the cost of the GRCorps members’ living allowance, health insurance, travel and other fringe costs. This cost is estimated to be $18,000 for the 11 months of service. The AmeriCorps grant to the Mayors Caucus will cover the remainder of the cost to support the GRCorps member and administer the program. A municipality may “share” the cost of a full-time GRCorps member with another municipality or host organization and pay $9,000 for 5 1/2 months service, if a suitable partner can be found. The Caucus will seek additional funding in hopes of further supporting the GRCorps.
The Caucus will manage recruitment, training, administration, benefits and payroll. GRCorps members will receive a living allowance of $18,000, health insurance, training, and a travel allowance for professional development opportunities. The AmeriCorps program will directly pay the GRCorps members an additional award of about $6,000 upon successful completion of their full-time term of service. GRCorps members may use that Segal AmeriCorps Educational Award for educational expenses.

What commitment is required?
The Caucus will enter into a formal agreement with host communities and collect your share of the cost once a suitable GRCorps member is selected to serve in your community.

Host communities must participate in candidate selection and a half-day of interviews at a downtown location. After initial training in early October, host communities will be responsible for providing supervision and meaningful work on a day-to-day basis. Office supplies, a computer and any local travel is the responsibility of the host community.

GRCorps members will be needed for regional projects and periodic training up to 80 hours. These hours will count towards the 1,720-hour total, but will be assigned at the discretion of the Mayors Caucus.

One of our GRCorps members must be selected to serve in Illinois’ Disaster Corps. That volunteer will be required for 3 days of mandatory training in Chicago. This training may be helpful to the host community, but service hours will be reduced by the training hours (about 24 hours). Further, any hours of deployment by the Disaster Corps member will not be available to the host community.

What needs to be done by November 12, 2019?
The Caucus will submit a grant request (on Nov. 14) to Serve Illinois/AmeriCorps requesting funding for municipal and partner organizations that indicate their intention to host a GRCorps member, by November 12th. A very brief description of the nature of the work to be done is needed for the application. If the Caucus secures funding and if the host organization secures local approval, parties will enter into a formal agreement in August 2020. Hosts must pay the $18,000 cost share at that time.

To reserve a spot for a GRCorps member, contact Edith Makra at emakra@mayorscaucus.org or 312-201-4506 by Nov. 12, 2019.

The Greenest Region Corps can demonstrate our collaborative strength to “get things done” – underscoring both the motto of the Serve Illinois AmeriCorps program and the attitude of GRC communities working collaboratively to address the goals of the GRC.