

GeoCorps for Mentors Part 1: Information for a Smooth Start



THE
GEOLOGICAL
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Table of Contents

Introduction to GSA and the GeoCorps™ America Program

The Geological Society of America
The GeoCorps America Program
GSA GeoCorps America Staff
GSA's Roles and Responsibilities

An Introduction the GeoCorps America's Partners

GSA's Staffing Partner: Aerotek, Inc.
Aerotek's Roles and Responsibilities
Government and Stewardship Organization Partners
Bureau of Land Management's Roles and Responsibilities

GeoCorps America Program Details

Program Characteristics
Program Timeline
Program Costs

The Application and Selection Process

Submitting a Project
Recruiting
Application Process
The Interview and Selection Process

Preparing for a GeoCorps Participant

Notifying GSA
Preparing Your Participant
GSA and Aerotek Enrollment
Background Checks
Time Sheets
Considering Extensions

Contacts

GSA
Aerotek

Further Resources

About GSA and the GeoCorps America Program
GSA and GeoCorps Social Media
About Aerotek, Inc.
Diversity
Works Cited

The Geological Society of America and The GeoCorps America Program

The Geological Society of America

The Geological Society of America (GSA) is a global professional society with a growing membership of more than 24,000 individuals in 115 countries. GSA provides access to resources for geoscience professionals to continue their career growth, including meetings, publications, grants and awards, professional development opportunities and education programs.

You can learn more about the Geological Society of America at www.geosociety.org.

The GeoCorps America Program

GeoCorps America is a program of the Geological Society of America (GSA) operated in partnership with government agencies and other organizations committed to science and stewardship. Through GeoCorps America, GSA places geoscientists from all walks of life in temporary paid projects focused on geosciences, stewardship and conservation. Details of GeoCorps' current partners and available opportunities can be found on the [GeoCorps Home Page](#). Current news is available on the [GeoCorps Facebook page](#), and by following @GeoCorps on [Twitter](#).

The GeoCorps America mission is to further geoscience research, education, and awareness, by providing inclusive, hands-on, career development opportunities in partnership with government agencies and other organizations that are committed to science and stewardship.

The GeoCorps program works towards this mission by meeting the following objectives:

- a. Increase the number of geoscientists interested in conducting research, education, and resource management with government agencies and stewardship-focused organizations by providing rewarding opportunities for hands-on education and career development
- b. Broaden the diversity of the geosciences professional community by providing inclusive opportunities to gain valuable, career-related experience
- c. Promote the adoption of a land ethic by current and future geoscientists, resource managers, and policy makers
- d. Build public and professional awareness of the role of the geosciences in resource management and policy making
- e. Raise public knowledge of the value of geological, and other, natural resources.

GeoCorps America Staff

GeoCorps is operated as part of the Education, Communication and Outreach (ECO) Department of GSA.

Matt Dawson, GSA's Education Programs Manager, is the GeoCorps program coordinator. Matt has a background in geology, and is an alumnus of the GeoCorps America program. Matt participated in the program in 2007 with the BLM at the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Fort Benton, MT.

Lesley Petrie, GSA's Education and Outreach Program Coordinator, helps to run the daily operations of the GeoCorps America program. Lesley has a background in geology and biogeochemistry.

If you are ever in Boulder, CO visit GSA! Besides saying "hi" to the GeoCorps staff, the building and grounds around GSA are full of interesting geological specimens. "Big Al," a 9ft piece of Silver Plume granite, will greet you in the lobby. To learn more about GSA headquarters and "Big Al" take a look at our [visitor guide](#).

Either Matt Dawson or Lesley Petrie can be contacted with questions about the GeoCorps America program.

Matt Dawson

Phone: 303-357-1025

Phone: 617-909-9430 (mobile; *OK to call/text in case of emergency*)

E-mail: mdawson@geosociety.org

Lesley Petrie

Phone: 303-357-1097

E-mail: lpetrie@geosociety.org

GSA's GeoCorps America Program Roles and Responsibilities

GSA is responsible for the management and administration of the GeoCorps America program. This includes:

- Guiding the overall direction of the program, including ensuring the program meets best practice standards for career development programs
- Advertising the GeoCorps program and exploring new agency, organizational, and diversity focused partners
- Managing GeoCorps' online presence, including webpages, Facebook page, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts
- Recruiting participants for the GeoCorps program
- Maintaining program and participant records
- Working with our staffing agency partner to provide participant payments, and provide worker's compensation, FICA, and required participant benefits
- Acting as a secondary approver for participant's weekly timesheets
- Collecting participant reports and products that result from the program
- Program evaluation and reporting
- Maintaining contact with program alumni, and providing alumni with support and networking opportunities
- Pursuing opportunities to expand and enhance the GeoCorps program through new partnerships, grants, and awards

An Introduction to GeoCorps™ America's Partners

GSA's Staffing Partner: Aerotek, Inc.

Aerotek, Inc. is the largest staffing and talent engagement firm in the US, with over 200 offices in North America. Aerotek's mission is to bring great people and great organizations together.

The [Aerotek Facebook page](#) is a great place to learn more about Aerotek's focus on people. In addition to getting great application tips to pass on to your participant, you can also find out what Aerotek staff did for Earth Day.

Aerotek's Roles and Responsibilities

Aerotek will be the official employer of GeoCorps participants, recruited by GSA. Aerotek is responsible for administering the employment related aspects of the GeoCorps America program. This includes:

- Collecting participant information for enrollment
- Organizing participant background checks (This is separate from the federal background check.)
- Managing participant payments through direct debit or a reloadable debit card
- Managing payroll taxes, FICA, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation (participants should report any injury to the Aerotek Injury Reporting Hotline: 1-844-884-3119)
- Providing health insurance, and other benefits, for participants when required
- Working with GSA to keep participant reimbursement information current
- Managing an online timesheet system for participants and their mentors
- Troubleshooting any issues with participant payments and the timesheet system

Government and Stewardship Organization Partners



The GeoCorps America program currently partners with the Bureau of Land Management, The U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management Direct Hire Authority (DHA) Program. GSA also partners with the National Park Service Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) program.

Bureau of Land Management GeoCorps America Roles and Responsibilities

For the GeoCorps program, GSA has agreements with individual offices throughout the BLM. Individual BLM locations and GeoCorps mentors are responsible for:

- Submitting position proposals to the GSA website
- Arranging funding for the position(s)
- Preparing selected candidate for unique conditions of their work site
- Mentoring participants and overseeing their project
- Providing training and feedback to participants throughout their project
- Completing the online [program evaluation](#) at the end of your participant's project

The primary mentor is the person who is listed as the primary contact in the online position description. The secondary mentor is the person who is listed as the secondary contact. The primary mentor will be the participant's main contact and lead supervisor during their project. Both the primary and secondary mentor should:

- Be working with the participant
- Be familiar with the details of the project, including budget
- Be familiar with the plan for project work
- Be able to confirm the participant's hours if GSA has questions
- Be prepared to be contacted by GSA and/or Aerotek if there are questions about the project

Please do not list somebody as a project contact if they will not be interacting with the participant, or will not have the time or ability to answer questions about the project.

Past GeoCorps participants with the BLM have completed some interesting and valuable work. In 2013 David Khambu completed an interpretation project using [EarthCaching](#), another GSA program, at Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Learn more about past GeoCorps projects by reading our [2013 Annual Report](#).

GeoCorps™ America Program Details

Program Characteristics



Projects

GeoCorps projects may be focused on a wide variety of geoscience or geoscience related fields. Past projects have focused on some of the following disciplines.

- Geology
- Hydrology
- Paleontology
- Mapping and GIS
- Minerals
- Soils
- Glaciology
- Karst
- Astronomy
- Archaeology

Projects should provide the GeoCorps participant with a unique career development opportunity where they:

- Apply skills and knowledge learned through school or previous experience
- Enhance pre-existing skills
- Learn new skills
- Gain exposure to working with stewardship focused organizations (such as federal, state, or local agencies and non-profit organizations)
- Learn more about different career paths in their field
- Are provided with supervision and mentoring

The average GeoCorps project lasts 10 to 12 weeks. Projects should last no less than 10 weeks and cannot extend more than one year.

Participants

GeoCorps participants must be U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents (green card holders), and must be at least 18 years of age. To be eligible for the benefits of Public Land Corps positions participants must be between the ages of 18 – 30.

When participants have a constructive and positive experience they gain the skills to become part of the BLM.

Clayton Schmidt, a GeoCorps participant with the BLM NLCS in 2015, now works for the NLCS as a Planning and Environmental Specialist. To learn more about GeoCorps Success Stories read the [2015 Annual Report](#).

Program Timeline

Action	Summer Dates	Fall/Winter Dates
Call for Proposals Distributed	October	April
Summer Projects Received	Beginning of December	Beginning of May
Applications Open	Beginning of December	Beginning of May
Applications Close	Beginning of February	Beginning of July
Applications are Distributed	Mid-February	Mid July
Agencies begin interview process	Beginning of March	Beginning of August
Offers made to top candidates	Mid-March	Mid-August
Candidates accept offers	Mid-March	Mid-August
Agencies start background check process	Beginning of April	Beginning of September
GSA and Aerotek start the enrollment process	Beginning of April	Beginning of September
GeoCorps Participants start their projects	May - June	October - January

GSA needs to be notified of participant selections at least one month prior to the participants start date to ensure that all necessary paperwork can be completed on time.

Program Costs

The hourly wage of GeoCorps participants is tied to the Federal Minimum Wage for Contractors, and the cost of hosting a GeoCorps project changes accordingly. GSA updates the cost of a GeoCorps project every year at the end of September. The updated costs are effective at the start of the Federal Fiscal Year.

GeoCorps Project Costs Applicable May 2020 – September 2020:

- Total Project Cost: Approximately \$8,800 for a 12-week position.
 - This does not factor in higher wages, special state taxes, travel costs, etc.
- Participant's Minimum Wage: \$10.80/hour

Projects in California, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington DC, and West Virginia include additional costs due to local minimum wages and/or additional taxes.

For a detailed breakdown of the cost of a GeoCorps project please contact GSA for a copy of your agency's GeoCorps Financial Plan Template.

Minimum Wage

Local city and state minimum wages supersede the minimum wage for federal contractors if they are a higher rate. Recently many cities and states have introduced planned increases and/or indexed increases to the minimum wage. As such, minimum wages are increasing more frequently than before.

GSA and Aerotek will be keeping up to date on these changes.

If you would like to double check the minimum wage for your project areas, you can find minimum wage information at:

[NCSL State Minimum Wage Webpage](#)

[The Economic Policy Institute Minimum Wage Tracker](#)

Alaska and Hawaii

When participating in project in Alaska and Hawaii participants incur additional costs due to more extensive travel and a higher cost of living. We highly encourage an hourly rate of \$11.50 in these locations.

Providing Participants with Additional Pay

If you would like to pay your participant more than the standard hourly rate, or provide them with additional funds to cover the cost of housing, travel, or the local cost of living there are three options. All of these options are subject to income tax, and subject to Aerotek's administration fee. They do not incur additional administration fees from GSA.

- 1) Opt to increase the hourly rate for the project.

This may be used to offset housing expenses, the cost of living in the project area, and travel to and from the work site, or to acknowledge the additional skill required to complete the project successfully.

- 2) Notify GSA that there is a project budget for travel reimbursements.

This may be used to cover work related travel, such as hotel stays, gas, and camping. Please let GSA know what the total budget for travel reimbursements is, and what these funds may be used for.

Participants will be able to submit a reimbursement claim online through the Aerotek timesheet system.

- 3) Provide your participant with a bonus.

This may be used to cover additional expenses incurred by your participant, where reimbursement does not seem appropriate, or as a reward for exceptional work. Aerotek requires additional information to process bonuses. GSA will provide a questionnaire upon request. Please allow at least three weeks to get bonuses processed and paid to participants.

Extensions

We highly encourage you to plan a participant's entire term before it begins. Extensions will incur additional costs based on the length of the extension.

Extensions and the Affordable Care Act

Depending upon the length of the extension, extending a participant may require that they are offered health insurance, as mandated by the Affordable Care Act. Please initiate extensions that will make the length of a position 4 months (16 weeks) or longer early so that health insurance requirements can be considered.

As part of the ACA employees who work 30 hours per week, or whose hours equal at least 130 hours a month (~ 30 hours per week) for more than 120 days (~ 4 months) in a year are full time, and will require health insurance.

Overtime

As GeoCorps participants are now considered employees they are subject to overtime laws. Overtime laws are different in each state. If a GeoCorps participant works hours that are considered to be overtime by state law, they **must** be paid the overtime rate, which is one and a half times the regular rate. It is very difficult to anticipate and budget for overtime, therefore overtime needs to be avoided unless your office has specifically planned for it and coordinated with GSA during the agreement process. Otherwise GeoCorps participants cannot work over time. GeoCorps participants must work 40 hours per work week (Sunday through Saturday).

In Alaska, California, and Nevada, overtime also takes effect when a participant exceeds 8 hours in a day. In Colorado, it also takes effect when a participant exceeds 12 hours in a day.

Alaska has a "Flexible Hour Work Plan" that could allow for work days up to 10-hours long. If your office is interested in obtaining a flexible hour work plan exemption for your participant please notify GSA as soon as you have selected your participant. Your participant must be willing to work a flexible schedule. The flexible schedule cannot be a requirement of the position.

If a participant works overtime the partner agency will be responsible for allocating additional funds to the project, or working with GSA to amend the project timeline and keep it within budget. Please contact GSA immediately if you are aware of a situation where it will not be possible to avoid overtime.

The Application and Selection Process

Submitting a Project

GeoCorps America Project Descriptions are submitted online on the GeoCorps webpage. Follow these steps to submit a position:

- 1) Go to the GeoCorps [Land Managers page](#).
- 2) Click on the link for BLM staff to submit a project proposal.
- 3) If you are new to GeoCorps America, or your e-mail address has changed, click the blue link under the submit button. The link reads: “Click here if you forgot your password, or if this is your first time using this system.”
- 4) Enter the e-mail address that you would like to use to manage your GeoCorps positions.
- 5) A password will be sent to that e-mail address.
- 6) Return to the Land Managers page. Click on the link for BLM staff to submit project proposals.
- 7) Use your e-mail address and the password that was sent to you to log in.
- 8) If this is your first time in the system you will be prompted to add a new position.
- 9) If this is not your first time as a GeoCorps Mentor you will have 2 options.
 - a) You can create an entirely new position. To do this click “Add a New Position Description”
 - a) You can create a new position using an old position as a template. To do this scroll down to the position you wish to use as a temple. Click “Use This As A Template For A New Job.”
- 10) Do not click “Edit Position” if you want to use an old an old position as a template. If you create your new position this way applications from the previous year will be included in your application pool. We try to catch this error on our end, but cannot always catch it in time. Once the position has been posted there is no way for us to filter out old applications.
- 11) Fill in all of the fields, paying attention to the character limit.
- 12) When you are finished click “Preview and Save” to submit your position.

Editing Positions

If your position needs to be edited once you have clicked “preview and save” you can login and click the “edit” button under the position.

If the position needs to be edited once GSA has posted your position online please contact GSA to request the edits. If you make the edits yourself at this point our online system will remove your position from our online listing.

Recruiting

Position descriptions will be briefly reviewed for errors by GSA staff, and then posted online to the GeoCorps Positions web page. Applicants to the GeoCorps America program can view positions from this page, and then complete online applications.

Recruiting for GeoCorps America takes place year round, at GSA events, and through our social media presence. When positions are posted GSA does the work of promoting your position through our website, social media accounts, extensive e-mail list, GSA campus representatives, program alumni, and by sharing the opening with other like-minded organizations.

You can help with the recruiting process by liking and following our social media accounts. This will allow us to share your posts and allow you to share GeoCorps position announcement with your own social media audience.



www.facebook.com/geocorps

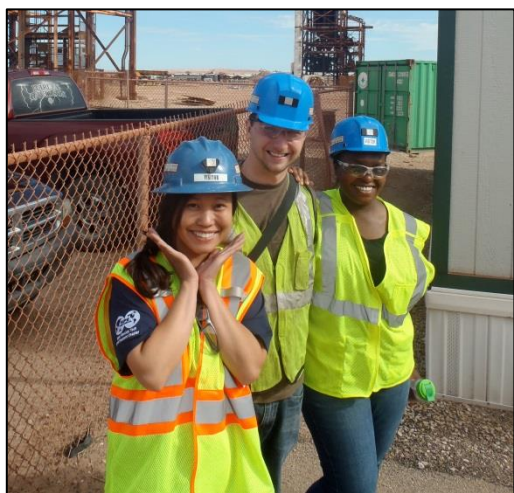


@ GeoCorps

Recruiting materials for the GeoCorps program are available for download on the GSA website. If you would like to promote the program at your locations please use these materials.

If you are looking for applicants with experience in a specific field, or from a specific location, GSA is happy to do further, targeted recruiting. Please contact GSA directly if you have specific recruiting needs for your position, beyond our standard recruiting methods.

Recruiting and Diversity



GSA is dedicated to being an organization where a variety of ideas, abilities, backgrounds, and needs are encouraged, and our diverse membership is provided with opportunities to participate and contribute. The organization recognizes that supporting a diverse community of geoscientists encourages the collaboration and variety of perspectives that is key to scientific discovery, and ensures that stewardship strategies are responsible and representative. “GSA strongly encourages the participation in any GSA activity of all its members regardless of race, sex, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability and will undertake reasonable efforts to ensure that its activities are open to all.” (The Geological Society of America, 2016.)

To learn more about how GSA approaches diversity please read GSA’s Official Position Statement on [Diversity in the Geosciences](#).

In general the geosciences fare poorly when compared to the diversity of STEM professions as a whole. The AGI status of the Geoscience workforce report notes that diversity in the geoscience workforce is closely linked to the diversity in geoscience academic programs (Gonzales and Keane, 2011), and the U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration’s report, “Education Supports Racial And Ethnic Diversity in STEM” suggests that this is true for STEM subjects as a whole. (Beede, 2011)

As the majority of GeoCorps participants are undergraduate or graduate students, and the geosciences include only a small group of diverse students, recruiting for diversity in GeoCorps can be a challenge, but it is one we are dedicated to taking on. GeoCorps also aims to make all of its recruiting fair, and compliant with all EEO and Affirmative Action policies.

You Can Support Diversity within GeoCorps by:

- Mentoring multiple GeoCorps positions, that ask for a diversity of levels of qualifications and experiences
- Offer training through your GeoCorps position so that an undergraduate student, or student who has had fewer opportunities for hands on learning, can qualify for the position
- Offer training for very specific, rare or technical skills, instead of listing the skill as a qualification
- Ensure that staff at your location are aware of diversity issues, or have had diversity training
- Think about the language you use in your position description, and if it might discourage diverse applicants.
- Let GSA know if you would like us to promote your position with a specific diversity oriented organization

In order to attract the most qualified and diverse group of applicants GeoCorps America promotes positions with the following organizations:

- [Institute for Broadening Participation](#) (IBP)
- [American Indian Science and Engineering Society](#) (AISES)
- [Society for Advancement Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science](#) (SACNAS)
- [National Association of Black Geoscientists](#) (NABG)

We also promote positions through the alumni of the GSA [On To the Future](#) program, and through other diversity focused organizations not listed here. If you are aware of a diversity focused organization that you would like to see GSA recruiting through please pass the information on to staff at GSA.

Application Process

Applicants to the GeoCorps America program submit applications online, using GSA's [application system](#).

In addition to asking for contact information the system collects resumes, cover letters, recommendation letters, and the answers to seven short answer questions. A GeoCorps Application Worksheet can be downloaded from our webpage, under the [Apply](#) tab.

If an applicant contacts you with questions about the application process, or their resume and cover letter, please direct them to GSA. Applications must be submitted online through the GSA application system so that GSA can maintain the required records for the program, and in order to provide all applicants with an even playing field.

GSA membership is NOT required to apply to the GeoCorps program as of the fall/winter season of 2016-2017.

Applications remain open for 1 – 2 months. Applicants may complete their applications at any point during that time period.

Viewing Your Applications

When the application period closes GSA will send you an e-mail with instructions on viewing your applications. The GSA website has been undergoing some alterations. For the most up to date information on how to login to view applications you should read the e-mail sent out for that year and season.

If you want to login to view application before the application period closes you can do so by visiting the [Land Managers](#) section on the GeoCorps homepage.

Suggestions for Conducting a Positive Phone Interview

- 1) Be Prepared
Make sure you have everything you need to hand before the interview. Be familiar with the equipment you are using, the candidate's resume, and remove any possible distractions. Interruptions can have more impact during a phone interview.
- 2) Outline the Interview
Give the interviewee an outline of the interview when you first start the call, so everyone knows what to expect.
- 3) Smile
Smiling affects the tone of your voice. Smiling during the interview will give a more positive and welcoming impression to the interviewee.
- 4) Listen
Listen so you can pick up cues from your interviewee, effectively ask for more information, and provide more information when the candidate needs it. The interviewer should only spend around 30% of the interview speaking.
- 5) Close with Next Steps
At the end of the interview let the candidate know what the next steps in the process will be.

If you do choose to view applications before the application period has closed please refrain from starting interviews or making offers until after the closing date for your position. Following the Program Timeline as closely as possible avoids complications for you, GSA, and other locations participating in the program. If you will not be able to follow the program timeline please contact GSA as soon as possible so that we can make any alternative arrangements that are needed.

The Interview and Selection Process

Once you have reviewed your applications, and the application closing date has passed, pick your top candidates and arrange phone interviews. Once you have completed the phone interviews make a list of your top three candidates. You may either contact your top candidate yourself to offer the position, or you may pass your top three list on to GSA and we can make the offer.

It is preferred that you make the offer yourself. This gives you the opportunity to answer any remaining questions the participant may have about the position, and discuss start and end dates.

If you would like GSA to make the offer on your behalf please contact us, and provide us with the following information:

- First and Last names of your top three candidates
- Start Date
- Duration
- End Date

GSA will offer the position to your top candidate over e-mail. When/if they accept the position we will contact you. The participant may wish to get in touch with you to ask any unanswered questions that they have about the position. If your top candidate does not accept the position we will offer the position to the next candidate on your list.

Example GeoCorps Interview Questions

- 1) Why are you interested in the GeoCorps program, and what do you aim to gain through participating in the program?
- 2) What recreation, volunteer, or work experience do you have with public lands?
- 3) Give me an example of a time that you adapted positively to unfamiliar surrounding or environment. What steps did you take to help yourself adapt?
- 4) What makes you unique from other candidates?
- 5) Provide an example of a time in which you solved a problem for an employer, peer, or customer.
- 6) It is important that candidates know what their living situation will be before they accept a position, and that you know they will be comfortable with the situation. Describe any requirements for a personal vehicle and the housing arrangements/market, and ask the candidate the following questions:
 - Do you have a clean driving record?
 - Will you be able to bring a personal vehicle with you?
 - Will you be comfortable with these living arrangement/living in this remote community?
- 7) Are there any transportation or housing accommodations you would require in order to be able to take this position?

Preparing for a GeoCorps Participant



Notifying GSA

Once you have made an offer to a candidate, and they have accepted the offer, contact GSA with the following information:

- Participant's First and Last Name
- Intended Start Date
- Budgeted Work Hours/Duration in Weeks
- Intended End Date

If you have asked GSA to make the offers please provide information on start date, duration and end date when you give GSA your list of top three candidates.

GSA needs to be notified of your selection at least one month prior to your participants start date to allow time for all the necessary paperwork to be completed. We cannot guarantee that enrollment will be completed on time otherwise.

Preparing Your Participant

It is important that you take time to prepare your participant for the experience that they are going to have while working with you. The fewer surprises the participant has, the more positive the experience will be for them and for you. Here are some topics you should discuss with your participant before they start their enrollment process.

- The participant's daily work schedule and weekly timeline
- End products, results and desired outcomes for the project. Be very clear and specific about project objectives

- Review the housing arrangements again. For on-site housing cover guidelines, directions, and when they will receive a key. If housing is located in a remote area, make sure that they are aware of the conditions. If they are receiving a housing allowance remind them how much they are receiving, and let them know that you and GSA are willing to help find housing.
- Local transportation requirements or limitations. Make sure they are aware if they will need a personal vehicle, and why they will need a personal vehicle.
- Review environmental factors that may affect their work, and their comfort in their environment, such as heat, altitude, terrain, poisonous plants, local wildlife, or city living. Remember, what is a normal/safe environment to you may be very unfamiliar to your participant.

GSA and Aerotek Enrollment

Once GSA has received your selection we will send your participant a program welcome e-mail, and pass their contact information on to Aerotek.

Aerotek will contact the participant the week prior to their start date to begin enrollment paperwork, organize any required benefits, and introduce the participant to their organization and the time sheet system. It is important that your participant respond to Aerotek's requests for information promptly, and completes all paperwork prior to starting their project.

GSA will also ask your participant to sign a participant agreement and complete a pre-program survey, which helps us to measure program success.

Background Checks

Each GeoCorps America participant is required to complete a background check, administered by Aerotek, Inc. This background check is separate, and in addition to, any federal background checks that your organization may require in order to provide building or computer access.

You are responsible for initiating any federal background checks that are required to provide the participant with access to you resources, such as the computer system. Please start this background check process as soon as your candidate has accepted the position. Delays in the processing of federal background checks have occurred in the past, prevented participants from accessing key resources, and affected their ability to complete their GeoCorps project.

Time Sheets

GeoCorps participants must complete a time sheet every week. We highly suggest that participants complete time sheets by close-of-business every Friday, to allow for processing time. If a timesheet is not completed by your participant by Monday at 9:00 a.m. (Mountain Time), there is a possibility they will not get paid for that week.

If you or your participant will be unable to access the timesheet system before the Monday deadline due to vacation, field work, or other issues, please contact GSA by phone or e-mail to report the participant's hours. GSA can relay that information to Aerotek, provided we receive it in advance of the timesheet deadline.

GSA staff will review and approve participant time sheets on a weekly basis. If we notice any issues, or unscheduled overtime, we will notify the primary mentor.

Considering Extensions

We highly recommend that extensions be planned for from the beginning of a GeoCorps project, and be incorporated into the initial project term. However, when a participant is performing particularly well, or it has become apparent that the project will take more time to complete than anticipated, extending the GeoCorps project is an option.

GSA must be notified that you would like to extend the project at least four weeks prior to the project's original end date. This allows for time to adjust the project budget, process the participant's new agreements, and notify Aerotek of the change.

The project's new end date, and any additional changes to the project, must be finalized before the project's original end date. GSA will not notify Aerotek of an extension until details have been finalized. If Aerotek is not notified of an extension before the project's original end date they will cut off a participant's access to their time and expense system.

Projects cannot be extended past 1 calendar year from the initial start date, regardless of breaks or hours worked.

Holidays and Time Off

GSA recommends that GeoCorps participants receive paid time off (PTO) for federal holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, etc.), as well as one day (8 hours) of PTO per each six week period served on a GeoCorps project. To use PTO, a participant will simply need to submit the hours on their time sheet and contact GSA to let them know which submitted hours represent PTO. The participant and their mentor are responsible for tracking PTO.

GeoCorps participants may take unpaid time off, with permission from their primary mentor. If the primary mentor is willing to allow the time to be made up later, and the participant is willing and able to do so, the hours can be added to the end of the project, pushing back the project end date. It is also acceptable for the participant to not make up hours missed, if that is not feasible (due to the participant's availability, primary mentor schedule/needs, etc.). All of a participant's time off and schedule changes are up to the discretion of the primary mentor unless otherwise covered by local or national laws. Please be sure to notify GSA of all time off and schedule changes ASAP so that GSA can track the hours and ensure that the total time worked fits within the project budget.

If a participant feels ill or shows symptoms of illness, they should inform their primary mentor, remain at home, and not report to the project site that day. If they are already at the project site, they should inform their primary mentor and return home immediately.

**At the discretion of the primary mentor and host agency, and if the project budget allows, a participant may be paid for additional time off, beyond the standard federal holidays and PTO allotment. GSA encourages GeoCorps mentors to consider this option, particularly in certain emergency or otherwise unusual situations. GSA does not wish to penalize participants for illness or other situations beyond their control, and GSA does not want participants to feel as though they should show up to work even if they are ill. If you wish to provide your participant with additional paid time off, please discuss it with GSA; you may also need to check with your Grants & Agreements specialists to confirm this is acceptable.*

Flexible/Alternative Work Schedules

The default schedule for most GeoCorps projects is 40 hours per week, worked Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (local time). However, if permitted by the agency host site and project mentor, GeoCorps participants may work flexible/alternative schedules. For example, participants may work a compressed workweek and complete 40 hours in fewer than five work days, but they must not work more than 10 hours in a 24 hour period. Any arrangement made for flexible/alternative schedules will be on a trial basis, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of the participant, GSA, the hosting agency, or Aerotek. Once approved, the participant (and mentor) should communicate their flexible/alternative work schedule with GSA and with any team members. The weekly timesheets submitted by the participant should reflect their flexible/alternative schedule and the actual hours worked.

Outside Employment

GeoCorps participants are permitted to work at jobs outside of their GeoCorps project, as long as it does not interfere with their participation in the GeoCorps program. Participants with outside jobs are expected to maintain the work schedule they have agreed to with their GeoCorps mentor and GSA. Work done outside of the GeoCorps program will not be considered an excuse for poor project performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, or refusal to conduct project-related travel. If outside work activity causes or contributes to project-related problems, it must be discontinued. If problems persist, the participant may be removed from the program.

Telecommuting

GeoCorps participants may telecommute (work remotely) on a case-by-case basis, subject to the guidelines set by the host agency. Aerotek, Inc., the official employer of all GeoCorps participants states “An employee’s ability to work remotely is determined individually based on job functions, hardware and software requirements as well as client [GSA & federal agency] protocols that must be adhered to. Your Aerotek representative will discuss options with you directly.”

GSA considers telecommuting to be a viable alternative work arrangement in cases where individual, project, and supervisor characteristics are best suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows participants to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their regular workweek. Telecommuting is a voluntary work alternative that may be appropriate for some participants and some projects. The GeoCorps mentor and participant should work together to coordinate resources, such as computers and files, noting that some resources, such as government computers and networks, may not be available while telecommuting. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a program-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of participating in the GeoCorps program.

GeoCorps participants requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must have returned a signed copy of their GSA participant agreement, have completed all required enrollment paperwork for the program’s staffing partner Aerotek, Inc. prior to completing any work hours, and must be meeting the performance expectations of GSA and the GeoCorps mentor. If those conditions are met, then a participant would complete and sign a [GeoCorps Telecommuting Agreement](#). In general, a GeoCorps participant should have worked at least six full weeks (240 hours) on the project before transitioning to telecommuting, but this requirement can be waived at the host agency’s discretion. Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of the telecommuter, GSA, the hosting agency, or Aerotek. Refer to the “[GeoCorps Telecommuting Agreement](#)” for further information.

NOTE: Telecommuting may be integrated into any GeoCorps project for any reason, but may be particularly useful in certain emergency or otherwise unusual situations.

Back-up Project Plan

GSA recommends that agency mentors consider having a back-up project plan ready in case the original project is not able to occur as intended. Changes may be required due to environmental conditions, the availability of personnel and resources (mentors, field partners, housing, computers, etc.), facility closures, or other unexpected causes. If project plans need to change, please inform GSA, your candidate(s)/participant(s), and Grants & Agreements specialist ASAP. Telecommuting may be one back-up option to consider.

Housing

When possible, it is preferable for a GeoCorps participant to reside in agency-provided housing, at no cost to them. If this is not available, please consider providing them a higher wage to help offset their costs to pay for a local rental. Please be sure to clearly communicate the housing situation to the participant, and if they must find their own housing, please provide them with information that will help with their search. If there is a change in the housing situation, particularly due to an emergency (facility closure, etc.), please work on a back-up plan ASAP and communicate that with the participant and with GSA.

Contacts

If you have questions about the GeoCorps America program please contact the program staff at GSA.

Matt Dawson
Education Programs Manager
303-357-1025 (office)
617-909-9430(mobile; *OK to call/text in case of emergency*)
mdawson@geosociety.org

Lesley Petrie
Education and Outreach Program Coordinator
303-357-1097
lpetrie@geosociety.org

If you have questions specifically pertaining to timesheets, please contact Aerotek.

Lauren Robertson
Customer Support Associate
Aerotek, Inc.
303-224-4518
larobert@aerotek.com

Chloe Hanley-Kempken
Customer Support Associate
Aerotek, Inc.
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chanley@aerotek.com

Further Resources

About GSA and the GeoCorps America Program

- The GeoCorps America Home Page
<https://www.geosociety.org/geocorps/>
- About GeoCorps America
https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Education_Careers/Field_Experiences/GeoCorps_America/GSA/fieldexp/GeoCorps/about.aspx
- The GeoCorps America Land Manager's Page
https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Education_Careers/Field_Experiences/GeoCorps_America/GSA/fieldexp/GeoCorps/resources_mgr.aspx
- GeoCorps America Application Instructions (including an Application Worksheet)
https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Education_Careers/Field_Experiences/GeoCorps_America/GSA/fieldexp/GeoCorps/apply.aspx
- About the Geological Society of America
https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/About/Who_We_Are/GSA/About/Who_We_Are.aspx?hkey=666cec02-e4bb-4c1f-98b2-035ba307e4c4
- The Geological Society of America's Official Position Statement on Diversity in the Geosciences Community
https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Science_Policy/Position_Statements/gsa/positions/position15.aspx

GSA and GeoCorps Social Media

- The GSA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/GSA.1888>
- The GSA Twitter Feed (@geosociety): <https://twitter.com/geosociety>
- GeoCorps America Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/GeoCorps/>
- GeoCorps America Twitter Feed (@geocorps): <https://twitter.com/geocorps>

About Aerotek, Inc.

- Aerotek Home Page: <https://www.aerotek.com/>
- Aerotek Time Sheet Page: <https://www.aerotek.com/jobseekers/tools-resources/timesheets>
- Aerotek Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Aerotek>
- Aerotek Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/aerotek>
- Aerotek Injury Reporting Hotline: 1-844-884-3119

Diversity

- Executive Order 13583 – Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/executive-order-13583-establishing-coordinated-government-wide-initiative>
- US Office of Personnel Management, Government Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2011
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reports/governmentwidestrategicplan.pdf>
- “Education Supports Racial and Ethnic Equality in STEM.” *U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration*.
<http://www.esa.doc.gov/reports/education-supports-racial-and-ethnic-equality-stem>
- “Good Jobs Now and for the Future.” *U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration*.
<http://www.esa.doc.gov/reports/stem-good-jobs-now-and-future>
- “Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation.” *U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration*.
<http://www.esa.doc.gov/reports/women-stem-gender-gap-innovation>

Diversity Organizations

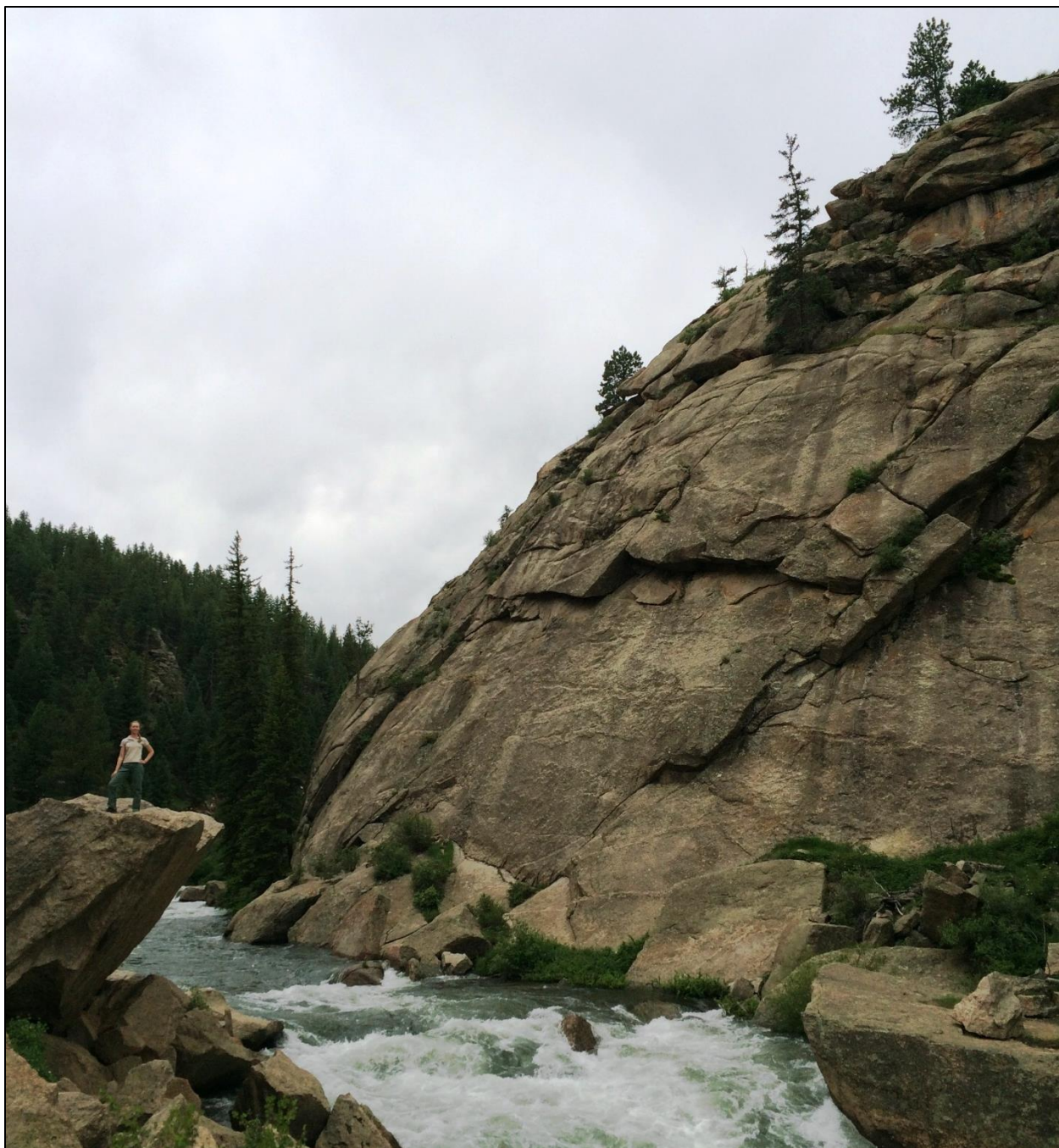
- Institute for Broadening Participation (IBP)
<http://www.pathwaystoscience.org/>
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
<http://www.aises.org/>
- Society for Advancement Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
<http://www.sacnas.org/>
- National Association of Black Geoscientists (NABG)
<http://nabg-us.org/>

Works Cited

Beede, D., Julian, T., Khan, B., Lehrman, R., McKittrick, G., Langdon, D., and Doms, M., 2011a, Education Supports Racial and Ethnic Equality in STEM: U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration: <http://www.esa.doc.gov/reports/education-supports-racial-and-ethnic-equality-stem> (last accessed 10 May. 2016)

Gonzales, L., and Keane, C., 2011, Status of the Geoscience Workforce 2011: Alexandria, Virginia, American Geological Institute, 171 p.

The Geological Society of America, Inc. GSA’s Commitment to Diversity. Available at: <http://www.geosociety.org/aboutus/index.htm> (last accessed 10 May 2016)



GeoCorps America is a program of The Geological Society of America

www.geosociety.org



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www.gsafweb.org