



presents

*Living on the
AmeriCorps Stipend in
Maine*

Created in 2010 based on the AmeriCorps Alums panel at Tanglewood in Fall 2009 with input from Jenni Ricci, Danielle Denis, Kate McCarty, and Caitlyn Horose.

Eating

Food Stamps: Apply for food stamps through the Department of Health and Human Services. Bring pay stubs and bank account information—you may also need a letter from your AmeriCorps program. You will generally qualify for benefits if you have less than \$2000 in assets.

Food Pantries: Consider volunteering at your local food pantry to get access to some free food while helping your community. Some pantries require proof of residency or income to get services. Good Shepherd Food Bank serves communities throughout Maine. Preble Street, Learning Works, and the Root Cellar are good resources in Portland. You can also call 2-1-1 for a referral in your area.

Cut Your Costs: Some easy ways to spend less money at the grocery store include:

- Buy “day old” bread at the bakery
- Ask for cheese/meat ends at the deli

Farm Fresh Food: You can still get fresh fruit and veggies even on an AmeriCorps stipend. Many farmers accept EBT (food stamps) at local farmer’s markets. Local farms also offer farm shares in exchange for your time—Rippling Waters in Standish is one example of a farm where you can get free food for volunteering.

Share the Wealth: Of course, everyone knows that a potluck can help you save money, but consider having an ingredient party. If everyone brings a couple ingredients for a particular meal, your costs will be even lower!



Housing

Energy Assistance: Apply for energy assistance to cover heating/electricity/gas bills (roommates must also be low-income): <http://www.mainehousing.org/ENERGYPrograms.aspx>.

Rent Refunds: If you live (or have lived) in Maine for 12 months or more, apply for a rent refund: <http://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxrelief/tnr.htm>

Lower Your Fixed Costs: Try to lower your overhead costs by choosing an apartment with low rent, cutting back on cable and internet, and being conscious of energy usage



Health Care

Community Health Centers: For low cost health care, visit a Community Health Center. Listings of health centers in Maine can be found at <http://www.mepca.org/locationsHC.php> . For Community Dental Clinics, see <http://www.mepca.org/locationsD.php>

Reproductive Health: Planned Parenthood offers services on a sliding scale. Most AmeriCorps members can receive annual checkups, birth control, and other health services for free. Bring your insurance card; no proof of income is necessary. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/ppnne/index.htm>



Going Out

Libraries: Use your local library for books, CDs, DVDs, and free classes/workshops. Many libraries also offer museum passes to local attractions. For example, the Portland Public Library has free passes to the Portland Observatory.

Art Walks: Many communities in Maine have a monthly art walk where galleries open their doors with free snacks and wine.

First Friday in Portland, ME <http://www.firstfridayartwalk.com/>

Final Friday in Biddeford, ME <http://www.biddefordartwalk.com/>

GreenDrinks: GreenDrinks is a low-cost (\$2) social-networking event for individuals interested in issues related to the environment. Free beer is included in the \$2 cover charge. GreenDrinks is held in Portland on the second Tuesday of every month. Visit <http://portlandgreendrinks.com/> for more information.

Get Active: The YMCA offers scholarships for gym memberships—visit your local facility to learn more. Joining a local sports team like <http://cascobaysports.com/> in Portland is another great way to stay active and meet new people. Low cost adult sports are also offered by many Parks and Rec departments.

Learn Something: Take classes through community education programs in your community, often offered through universities, the local school district, or the parks and recreation department. You may also want to visit local businesses and see what classes/workshops/events they offer. Coffee shops, book stores, yarn shops, bike shops, etc all usually offer some free community events. Many AmeriCorps programs and host sites have budgets for trainings related to personal development—see if they will cover the cost!

University of Southern Maine: <http://usm.maine.edu/cce/>

Portland Adult Education: <http://www.portlandadulthood.org/pae2/index.php>

Portland Parks and Rec: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/rec/azparks.pdf>

Make Some Friends: Find people with similar interests in your area at <http://www.meetup.com/>.

Don't be Afraid to Ask:

Offer to volunteer at events you'd like to attend – you'll often get in for free (or a reduced rate). Don't be afraid to ask for discounts at local businesses or events! Past AmeriCorps members have received discounts at places like the Theater at Monmouth, Maine College of Art, Space Gallery, etc just for volunteering.

A variety of services are offered by members of the Hour Exchange (Portland), become a member and exchange services: <http://www.hourexchangeportland.org/>

Travel: Utilize fellow AmeriCorps members (and the alums network) for free accommodations when you travel, or check out <http://www.couchsurfing.org/>

Connect with Fellow AmeriCorps Members: Many of your fellow AmeriCorps members may have discounts they can offer you for services provided by their organization. Recent member have served at places like:

- Wolfe's Neck Farm in Freeport, ME (Liz): hiking trails, camping, community gardens, workshops <http://www.wolfesneckfarm.org/>
- Rippling Waters Farm in Standish, ME (Phil): farm shares, community potlucks, workshops <http://www.ripplingwaters.org/>
- Community Bicycle Center in Biddeford, ME (Dylan): cheap bikes for volunteers <http://www.communitybike.net/>
- The Telling Room in Portland, ME (Emily G): community for writers <http://tellingroom.org/>
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Portland, ME (Alexa): cheap new and used building materials for home improvement and other projects <http://www.habitatportlandme.org/>
- Space Gallery in Portland, ME: music and arts venue <http://www.space538.org/>

There are many more! Connect with other members and make connections!

Maine AmeriCorps Alums

AmeriCorps Alums is a community for service-minded individuals – we take on service projects, host social events, and advocate for relevant issues. Join us for info on events, networking, job leads, service projects, volunteer opportunities, and to be a part of a community of change!

Mission: To fully realize the potential of national service alumni as leaders in communities. **Vision:** The lifetime engagement of national service alumni as a transformational force for change in Maine's communities.



Connect With Us!

AmeriCorps Alums is for current members as well as alums. We always welcome new members, so come join us at an upcoming social event or service project.

Find us online at:

www.americorpsalumsme.org

www.facebook.com/amicorpsalumsmaine

Contact Caitlyn Horose, Chapter Leader:

Caitlyn@americorpsalums.org or (720)298-2490