



Position Title: Visitor Center Assistant

Position Service Site: Ottawa National Forest Visitor Center – Watersmeet, MI

Service Time: June 2 – August 22, 2025 (450 hours total, 40 Hours/Week)

Benefits: Living stipend total for the whole term = \$6,000 (\$500 per week) Education Award of approximately \$1,900 upon successful completion of service. To find out more about the Award, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more>

Housing is available.

Requirements: Valid Driver's license

Recommended: Personal Vehicle

LOCATION OVERVIEW: The nearly one million-acre Ottawa National Forest is in the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, an area known for its remote character, picturesque lakes and streams, vast northern hardwood forests, and abundant wildlife. Ottawa offers numerous recreational opportunities, including stream and lake fishing (blue-ribbon trout streams), deer and small-game hunting, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, birding, and cross-country and downhill skiing.

The half million acres that make up the southern portion of Ottawa contains numerous glacial lakes home to bald eagles, ospreys, loons, smallmouth and largemouth bass, walleye, northern pike, and other native fish and wildlife species. Some of the highest-quality streams and rivers in the Midwest are also found in Ottawa, with several now designated as Federal Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers. Rivers on the Forest drain into both Lake Michigan and Lake Superior watersheds, with several of the Lake Superior streams having numerous waterfalls. Three designated Wilderness areas on Ottawa, Sylvania, McCormick and Sturgeon River Gorge exist.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION: This position is responsible for providing visitor information and helping to coordinate responses to inquiries about recreation facilities, user permits, points of interest, and related activities. Educate visitors on Leave No Trace principles that will reduce negative impacts on the Ottawa National Forest. Opportunities to participate in and develop interpretive programs may be part of this position, as well as helping to deliver interpretive and environmental education programs. It may assist in developing or updating media and exhibits for use in the unit and the Visitor Center.

Team members may also periodically rotate into the recreation and Wilderness Crew, performing maintenance tasks at developed and dispersed recreation sites. Maintaining and restoring sites that visitors use for recreational purposes helps to prevent resource damage and minimize impact on the land. Maintenance of facilities is necessary to reduce sanitation impacts throughout the forest. Members will educate visitors on Leave No Trace principles that reduce adverse effects on the Ottawa National Forest. Opportunities to participate in and develop interpretive programs may be part of this position.

- Providing visitor education and interpretation in front-country and backcountry Wilderness settings.
- Collecting data
- The person selected for this position may take part in an overnight trip and can involve complex portage and campsite projects. The primary mode of travel is by canoe and foot. Major duties include backcountry maintenance using crosscut saws and axes as part of the standard toolkit for designated wilderness campsites, portage, and hiking trails. The incumbents will also conduct monitoring and inventory work to support Forest Plan objectives.

- Work will be performed primarily in an office setting.

The Visitor Center Assistant will be trained/certified in:

- First Aid and CPR
- Defensive Driving
- Radio/SPOT device
- Avenza

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist Visitor Center guests by providing information about specific recreation opportunities and activities, such as those at particular sites
- Inform visitors of rules and/or regulations
- Member uses initiative in carrying out recurring assignments independently. Detailed instructions are provided for new assignments. Unfamiliar situations or technical deviations from established practices are referred to as a mentor for guidance or resolution.
- Support Visitor Center staff in educational programming.
- Assist in developing and presenting interpretive/ educational programming for special events, school groups, and community outreach.
- Greet visitors and answer phone calls
- Periodically rotate onto the Watersmeet Recreation crew to perform and monitor day-to-day recreation maintenance, clean-up, and simple construction projects for sites, reporting issues. Day-to-day maintenance includes:
 - Mowing, trimming, and debris pick-up
 - Cleaning and maintaining fire rings, campsites, bathrooms, beaches, and other facilities
 - Assisting the public with questions about the district's camping and recreation opportunities.

HOUSING: If housing is available, Members should be prepared to live in communal housing with other program/organization/agency members. Members should expect to have roommates and must inform staff of any housing preferences or required accommodation.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum age requirement is 18 years old
- Ability to work independently
- Excellent communication skills
- Understanding of or willingness to learn various conservation practices
- Passionate about outdoor recreation
- Possess a valid driver's license
- Physical demands and service environment regularly require the service member to be outdoors in wooded areas and on uneven natural paths
- Ability to multitask and shift schedule and priorities to meet changing conditions
- Upon hire, a criminal background check will be conducted. Service with WisCorps will be considered probationary until all results are returned and have been reviewed

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