



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps Member Position Description

**Pontchartrain
Conservancy**



Member Position / Title: Education Program Assistant

of Member Slots in this Position: 1

Member Immediate Supervisor: Kimberly Cooke

Days / Hours of Service: Business hours are Monday – Friday (8 hours a day, exact schedule can be of member’s choosing). Some Saturdays may be required. If this occurs, the member will be given a weekday off prior or following the Saturday.

Member Immediate Supervisor Title: Education Coordinator

Partner Organization Name: Pontchartrain Conservancy New Canal Lighthouse - 8001 Lakeshore Dr, New Orleans, LA 70124

Website: www.scienceforourcoast.org

Organization/Agency Mission and/or Goals:

Pontchartrain Conservancy’s mission is to drive environmental sustainability and stewardship through scientific research, education, and advocacy.

The Pontchartrain Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization consisting of a 14-member board of directors representing Basin parishes and regulatory agencies.

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin is a 10,000 square mile watershed encompassing 16 Louisiana parishes. The land use of the region is both rural and urban and is the most densely populated region in Louisiana, including metro New Orleans and the state capital, Baton Rouge. It is one of the largest estuarine systems in the Gulf of Mexico containing over 22 essential habitats. The Basin's topography ranges from rolling woodlands in the north to coastal marshes in the south, with the 630 square mile Lake Pontchartrain as its centerpiece.

Program Mission and/or Goals:

PC’s Education Department’s goal is to educate the public on important issues affecting the Pontchartrain Basin. With increased awareness of water quality and coastal issues, citizens of the basin become better stewards of the region where they live. The release of our *Educator Essentials* toolkit and accompanying support from PC will empower teachers to tackle experiments and topics utilizing real data. By targeting teachers, our programming will reach many more students than working directly with classes alone.

Community Need:

This role will assist in the delivery of a variety of educational programming for the general public, schools, and educators. Teachers have limited resources for implementing environmental science topics, and our education programming fills this gap with offerings on many environmental topics, grounded by

emphasis on the scientific method and hands-on activities. The Education Program Assistant will provide support in maintaining our free teacher resources and in working directly with educators in teacher professional developments. Teachers are required to pursue continuing education, and we are able to use this as an opportunity to “train the trainer.” For each teacher that we equip with curricula, hands-on experience, and supplies, lessons are able to impact many more students than our staff could reach independently.

Member Position Summary:

The Education Program Assistant will conduct PC environmental education and outreach programs related to the general public, pre-K through 12 grade levels, and college students, and will look to review our current curriculum and educator materials to ensure they are current and relevant. This position will also review our hands-on activities with partner organizations to see if there are opportunities for improvement, and to truly engage children. For example, the member would evaluate the hands-on activities and review best practices in the region and the country, to bring PC to the “leader of the pack.” Additionally, the Education Program Assistant will assist in the role of docent for the New Canal Lighthouse Museum and Education Center as schedule permits (Monday-Friday).

Member Impact:

The member impact would be to facilitate increased awareness of water quality and environmental issues affecting the Greater New Orleans Region, as well as an increased awareness of PC and the successes of the organization to address these issues. Measurable short-term goals would be to assist in the development of health and safety procedures for the entire organization, procedures, and documentation. Measurable goals would include development and implementation of each procedure, completion of water quality data management systems, and building data exchange portals for use across the organization.

The member impact would be to facilitate STEM education regarding water quality and the coastal issues that Louisiana is facing by presenting educational programs to students and providing STEM materials to teachers. The member could especially help with ideas on how to engage a young demographic (their demographic), as our biggest membership and engagement is currently with older demographics. Additionally, by working with educators in the region to determine their needs, we can fill a crucial need in the community with our education program.

Essential Functions of Position:

1. Facilitate educational programming:
 - Facilitate programs for students, educators, and the public in a variety of locations;
 - Provide service-learning opportunities to students and volunteer groups as needed;
 - Partner with other organizations' in field programs as needed.
2. Grow *Educator Essentials* curriculum and professional development:
 - Maintain current *Educator Essentials* collections;
 - Add new collections to *Educator Essentials* curriculum and Teacher Professional Development;
 - Engage/train educators (particularly in underserved schools) to utilize all aspects of *Educator Essentials*;

- Develop and facilitate related in-person Professional Development along with the Education Coordinator; and
 - Recruit educators for related in-person Professional Development.
3. Track use and effectiveness of *Educator Essentials'* collections and related Professional Development along with the Education Coordinator.
 4. Provide educational activities at lighthouse special events.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

The member can receive most of the training on the job. All scientific data collection techniques will be taught in situ by team members of the water quality program for these activities, learning in the field is best. All training for this position would be on the job training with close supervision by the mentor. The mentor would also be available for consultation, questions, and general advice.

While not all skills and abilities are required, the following skill sets are suggested for a competitive placement within this position:

- Experience with Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Experience with Adobe
- Energetic, flexible person comfortable with speaking to children and adults as well as working with the public in general
- Suitable oral and written communication skills
- Communicate inclusively with diverse audiences
- Ability to stay organized, multitask and be efficient
- Experience using social media
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment

Required Academic and Experience Qualifications:

Undergraduate degree in Elementary Education or Science Education preferred, but not required.