

# The americorps urban safety program

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Key aspects of our program are designed to provide economic opportunity and improve quality of life for at-risk youth in the city of Detroit through engagement in a term of AmeriCorps service and learning.

Youth who reside in low-income urban areas are disproportionately affected by community violence as both victims and witnesses; this can result in antisocial behavior, social withdrawal, substance use, and academic problems (Copeland-Linder, 2010). It is estimated that 17.4% of Detroit youth age 16-24 are disconnected (neither working nor in school)—this is the second highest percentage among the 25 largest metro areas in the country (Social Science Research Council). Evidence of this phenomenon is observed in the alarmingly low high school graduation rate, with only 77.6% of Detroit students graduating high school and only 12.7% earning a bachelor's degree (American Community Survey). Furthermore, Wayne County recorded over 3,000 juvenile arrests in 2013—nearly twice as many as any other county in the state of Michigan (Michigan Statewide Juvenile Arrest Analysis Report 2008-2013). A recent study in Chicago demonstrates that summer employment programs targeting at-risk youth in “high-crime, low-income neighborhoods” reduces the incidence of violent crime among program participants.

The AmeriCorps Urban Safety (AMUS) Program is a Governor's / Mayor's AmeriCorps Urban Safety Initiative (AMUS) and a joint endeavor between Wayne State University, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan to address public health and safety issues for Detroit residents. Our vision is to help create safe and healthy communities in Detroit, especially focusing on its children and youth. Program staff analyze crime

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feeds to target our interventions to areas within neighborhoods where victimization of youth and other vulnerable populations is high. Members serving with the AMUS Program benefit from the economic opportunity to earn a stipend and education award. Members also have the opportunity to develop skills transferable to future academic, professional and life experiences through program activities and training. Our goal to help create safe and healthy communities in Detroit, especially focusing on the children and youth of the community.

AMUS programming started at the Center in 2009. For the past three years the program and has been successfully implementing the goal of creating opportunities for at-risk youth ages 17-24. The program engages and utilizes the talents of Detroit youth works to promote neighborhood safety and community. For example, members work in “ Service Teams” collaborating in community revitalization activities, boarding up vacant and open homes and cleaning up blighted properties, as well as conducting Healthy Home Screening Tool Assessments alongside staff members of the Center’s Green and Healthy Homes Initiative.

Many of the target neighborhoods where youth members serve in the AMUS Program are nestled within highly industrialized sections of the city of Detroit, which contain a variety of environmental and health concerns. Strategies to combat these concerns include identifying issues with housing and health, and utilizing knowledge and tools (e. g., home security enhancements; testing for lead and mold; community agencies for information and physical resources) to remedy them. These strategies have

been efficacious in other programming at the Center such as the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, and are taught to youth members in the course of their service.

The Center is unique in the City of Detroit for the scale of its AmeriCorps program in both resources and its citywide implementation. As an AmeriCorps program, it is able to provide youth members with both a stipend while service, and an education award on completion of their service term. The Center's expertise makes it highly qualified to implement all aspects of Program activities. The Program Director has led the program since its beginning, and other program staff have 3 to 6 years experience with the program. This history has allowed staff to build a strong skill set in recruiting, training, supervising, coaching and mentoring all AmeriCorps members with the program, and youth members in particular. The AMUS Program is being implemented from October 1, 2017 through March 31, 2019 with just over 50% of the youth members recruited to serve in Summer 2018.