Tips on talking with your family about post-graduate service.

» Talk to your family about the possibility of post-graduate service while you are in the very early stages of discernment.

» Express specific reasons why you want to do post-graduate service.

» Think about the mission statement of the particular program that you are considering and share your thoughts with your family.

» Express to your family how important social justice is, and why you want to continue serving the world community past graduation.

» Share a story about someone you know who has had a positive service experience after graduation. Explain to your family how this person has served as a model for you.

» Thoroughly research the opportunities of your placement choices. Share this information with your family.

» If possible, take your family to the service site. This can help parents see the worthiness of your possible long-term project.

We wish you well in your search to find the service that best suits you. Please know that we at the Center for Service and Action are here to assist you with any facet of your post-graduate service plans.

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If you are considering post-graduate service, it is likely that your family members and friends will have many concerns. This guide will give you some responses to frequently asked questions.

Why are you considering full-time post-graduate service?
» Most post-graduate placements engage in direct service with a non-profit organization.
» This daily involvement in volunteering, which betters the lives of others can be deeply rewarding.
» Service has a positive impact on the education of the whole person.
» Post-graduate service presents an opportunity to continue to live as a person of service.

Why is full-time volunteer service easier right after undergraduate school?
» Full-time service is less disruptive directly after graduation as a career or family may be difficult.
» The salaried job that you always planned for can wait a little while.

“From my perspective as a teacher and mentor, I feel that its essential for students to explore their vocational discernment to the fullest extent. A year, or two, of service after graduation is a transformative way for students to immerse themselves in the community and explore their talents. The experience is really like a fifth year of college, rich with experience. It is a great emotional, spiritual and professional value.”
- Eric Strauss, Ph.D.
Biology Professor, Loyola Marymount University

How will you pay off your student loans?
» Most programs offer forbearance or deferment of student loans to full-time volunteers.
» Payments can be delayed until their period of service is over.
» Forbearance- Payments are postponed, but the volunteer is still charged interest on the loan.
» Deferment- Volunteers are given a grace period for interest as well as payments on the loan.
» It is important to contact your lending agency about the possibility of forbearance and deferment as you are beginning to explore a particular post-grad program.

How will you support yourself financially? What about the benefits you get from salaried employment?
» Most programs offer a monthly stipend that covers the volunteer’s basic living expenses.
» Most programs provide room and board which means volunteers have a low cost of living.
» Most programs offer health insurance, and cover transportation costs.
» Many domestic programs make their participants eligible for the AmeriCorps Education Award. This is an award of $5,350 that can go toward repaying student loans or future graduate schooling.

Will your volunteer work be dangerous?
» Post-graduate service programs value their participants’ safety.
» The programs will withdraw volunteers from certain areas if the risk factors are too great.

“Post-graduate service helps to build a professional network, to gain work experience, and to develop transferrable skills necessary for any occupation. A demonstrated commitment to service as a leader within one’s community is a great way to distinguish oneself within a pool of qualified candidates.”
- Alycia McCullough, Career Counselor at Loyola Marymount University