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COD Opens Applications for Fellowship That Pays Students to Serve the Community

PALM DESERT, CA (March 11, 2026) - Applications are now open for College Corps, a paid fellowship that places College of the Desert students with local organizations serving the Coachella Valley community. The program is part of the statewide #CaliforniansForAll initiative led by California Volunteers and the Office of the Governor.

COD has secured up to \$2.52 million in grant funding to support the program through 2029, covering three consecutive academic years. To date, the college has delivered \$1,284,000 directly to students to reduce debt and reward their commitment to service.

Fellows contribute thousands of volunteer hours each year to community organizations including FIND Food Bank, directly addressing food insecurity throughout the Coachella Valley.

“College Corps offers students a meaningful way to get involved both on campus and in the local community,” said Jocelyn Vargas, Manager of the Basic Needs Center at College of the Desert. “Many of our fellows find the experience incredibly rewarding and take pride in giving back while building valuable skills.”

Applications for the 2026 cohort are now open. Eligible students are encouraged to apply.

The program offers students the opportunity to:

- Earn financial awards applied directly toward their education
- Gain real-world professional experience in the Coachella Valley
- Build leadership skills that translate directly to career readiness
- Join a community of fellows making a measurable difference through service

Students interested in joining the 2026 cohort can apply at:

<https://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/students/basic-needs/college-corps.php>.

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About College of the Desert

College of the Desert serves more than 20,000 students across five campuses in Palm Desert, Indio, Mecca/Thermal, Desert Hot Springs, and Palm Springs. Founded in 1958 and opened in 1962, College of the Desert is governed by the Desert

Community College District Board of Trustees. Through the pLEDGE program, the college offers eligible students two years of tuition-free education, removing financial barriers and expanding access to higher education in the community. College of the Desert provides the Coachella Valley with affordable degrees, certificates, and transfer pathways, offering in-demand programs that prepare workforce leaders and strengthen the local economy.