

Gap or Bridge Year Options

Cornell Career Services

Resources

Some students take a “gap” period lasting one or more years between two major phases of their lives, such as the time between graduating from college and starting graduate school or medical school. It can be a time for exploring a career field, engaging in national or international service, traveling, or working to save money for graduate school and to gain valuable experience.

A Few Considerations

Here are a few questions to ask yourself before doing a gap year: How much time can you take? Do you need to make money? Are you restricted to a certain geographical region? Do you need to gain a certain type of experience for graduate or medical school? Narrowing down where you want to be, for how long, the type of experiences you are looking for, and why will help you in your gap year search.

Resources

Career Services has a variety of information on this topic in the 103 Barnes Hall library. You can search the career library holdings by going to career.cornell.edu/Resources/Search Barnes Career Library. Use the “Key Words” search box at the top of the screen and enter gap year. You can narrow down your search by adding additional key words such as health, teach, international, short term, public policy, etc. From the Resources page, you can view a collection of websites through the Link Library tab and look at resources under “Gap” or “Bridge Year.”

Sample Community Service Gap Year Opportunities

AmeriCorps State and National

(www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps) This is the domestic Peace Corps. Types of positions and locations vary across the country. You can search by interest like “hunger” and “state.” Full-time volunteers receive a living allowance and receive an award at the end of service, which can be used for paying for eligible post-secondary education. You serve full-time or part-time, between

ten months to one year. You can look in Handshake for postings or search and apply for jobs online by type of position and location. An applicant must be a U.S. Citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien. Deadlines for applying vary depending on specific positions listed.

City Year (www.cityyear.org) Participants work with students in third-ninth grade who are at risk of dropping out and receive a modest stipend, health insurance, and an education award at the end of service. You serve full-time for eleven months in urban communities. You must have a high school diploma, GED, some college, or a college degree. You must be 18-25 years old. You must be a U.S. Citizen or legal permanent alien resident. You apply online through their website, and you can look for their postings in Handshake. Deadlines vary.

Teach for America (www.teachforamerica.org) Participants teach for two years in public schools and are paid with benefits. You must have a bachelor’s degree by the first day of summer training. It is a two-year commitment, and teacher training is provided. You must be a U.S. Citizen, national permanent/resident status, or deferred action for childhood arrivals. You must have at least a 2.5 GPA, and you can apply online through their website. You can also find postings through Handshake. Check their website and Handshake for more details and deadlines.

Sample Health Gap Year Opportunities

Community HealthCorps

(www.communityhealthcorps.org) This is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes healthcare for America's underserved, while developing tomorrow's healthcare workforce. Members perform a variety of activities associated with health services and programs for patients and communities, often by functioning as community health workers. Benefits include a living allowance, health insurance, and an education award. You must

be a U.S. Citizen or national, or lawful permanent resident.

Horseshoe Farm Fellowship

(www.projecthsf.org/gap-year-fellowship) This one-year (13-month) program is designed to prepare recent graduates to become leaders in the rapidly changing health and education fields. Fellows work with the Greensboro, AL, community and Horseshoe Farm programs and residents. Focus areas include community involvement and engagement; direct service and support to others; development, management, and leadership of a community-based nonprofit organization; and healthcare system issues. Housing is provided. A driver's license is needed. There is flexibility in fellow schedules to allow for medical school applications and interviews. The deadline is in early February.

The Wellstone Fellowship

(www.familiesusa.org/about-us/careers/wellstone-fellowship) This is a year-long program in Washington, DC. The Wellstone Fellow's primary responsibilities include drafting talking points, blogs, fact sheets, and other publications; developing content for the Families USA website and email lists; and other duties. The Fellow will learn about health reform implementation, health equity, the private insurance market, health system improvement, and other important health policy issues. The Wellstone Fellow will develop an understanding of the tactics and strategies used in state-based consumer health advocacy organizations. This is a paid fellowship with a deadline in early February.

Sample International/Other Gap Year Resources

BUNAC (www.bunac.org/) This organization offers flexible, paid work and travel programs in Canada, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. It also has volunteer and teaching placements in Africa, South and North America, and Asia. Internship programs are also offered in Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, Spain, Asia, and Central America. There is a cost.

Global Volunteer Network

(www.globalvolunteernetwork.org) The vision of this organization is to connect volunteers with communities in need, with a particular focus on vulnerable women and children. Length varies from one week to longer. Fees cover food and lodging.

Idealist (www.idealist.org) This organization's mission is to close the gap between intention and action by connecting people, organizations, ideas, and resources. The site offers a database of domestic and international nonprofit jobs, volunteer opportunities, internships and more.

Peace Corps (www.peacecorps.gov) You serve abroad for two years plus training, working directly with communities to build capacity in education, health, youth in development, the environment, community economic development and agriculture. It takes six months for the application process. Students apply for a specific program/country. For more information, Cornell's Peace Corps campus recruiter can be reached at peacecorps@cornell.edu.

Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com) This is the internet's meeting place for English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language teachers and students from around the world.

Handshake

Use Handshake for looking for short-term jobs, fellowships, and gap-year opportunities.

To learn more about gap-year options that are right for you, consider scheduling an appointment with Rita Boratav, who advises on gap year, 103 Barnes – 255-5296.