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National Benevolent Association
XPLOR
FAITH, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

NBA XPLOR

NBA XPLOR is a prophetic movement of and for young adults who are discerning lives of care and service. The Residency provides 10-month professional development and vocational discernment opportunities for 21- to 30-year-olds to live simply in community and engage in direct service and justice work. Through NBA XPLOR, we partner young adults with Disciples congregations, regional and general ministries, and wider communities—positively engaging neighborhoods, the congregations, and the young adults.

FOUR CORNERSTONES OF NBA XPLOR

Community Engagement and Justice Work

* Have you been wondering how to make a greater impact for good?
Connect the life of faith to the work of justice in your day-to-day life.

Spiritual Deepening and Vocational Discernment

* What is it that God and your heart are calling you to do?
Say yes to new ways of living into God's dreams for your life.

Leadership Development

* What do you need to know to do what you need to do?
Claim and hone your strengths for personal, spiritual, and professional leadership.

Simple Living in Intentional Community

* How do I learn to live with what I need, not with all that I want?
* How does living in community shape my answers and my practice?
Experience sharing resources and making decisions in a household community of faith.

NBA XPLOR is fully committed to a solid foundation of anti-racism and anti-oppression work. The XPLOR Cornerstones help Residents and host teams to engage practices of full inclusion and to celebrate diversity.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is NBA XPLOR?

NBA XPLOR is a Christian, faith-based, 10-month, congregationally hosted Residency for 21- to 30-year-olds who are discerning lives of care and service. The Residency runs mid-August through mid-June each program year.

2. What does an NBA XPLOR Residency involve?

Residents live under one roof within a diverse community of peers, where they engage in communal and personal spiritual practices ranging from prayer to simple daily meals together. They care for and learn from others in community-engagement internships, and they relate to their Host Congregation. This communal lifestyle is not typical in our culture, and yet it helps Residents examine and live out their values more intentionally and faithfully.

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3. What does a typical week of Residency look like?

A Residency week makes time for all facets of the Residency experience: 30 hours per week of direct, hands-on learning and work in the Community Engagement Site; weekly Sabbath time for personal and collective spiritual reflection, along with an experienced Spiritual Companion; free time for personal care (grocery shopping, laundry, entertainment, and rest); and about six hours a week serving and worshipping with the Host Congregation.

4. Do I have to be a Disciples of Christ church member to apply?

No, though Disciples may understand and experience NBA XPLOR in unique ways. This program may give preference to Disciples candidates, but the most important requisite is for the young adult to be curious how and where God might be calling—and they are ready to explore that call within a Disciples context.

5. What if a Resident is still sorting out religion/spirituality?

NBA XPLOR is intentionally formed to help Residents engage in “discernment”—intentional asking of how and where God might be calling someone in their personal, professional, spiritual, and relational life. We don’t assume Residents have all the “big questions” figured out. On the contrary, sorting out religion, theology, and spirituality is a life-long quest. NBA XPLOR helps Residents realize that and equip and affirm them in that journey.

6. Who would make a good Resident?

NBA XPLOR Residents are young adults who want their lives to make a difference but may not be certain as to what steps to take in that direction. They may have served in the military and want to explore a new service opportunity. They may have finished an undergraduate degree, but classroom education wasn’t enough to make their vocational path clear. They may feel a call to an ordained ministry of one sort or another, but going to seminary or pursuing a not-for-profit or social work degree seems premature. They may have started work right out of high school and now want a new opportunity that allows them to really consider how they want to engage in the world. NBA XPLOR provides an “in-between” time to reflect, discern, and decide what is next.

7. How much does it cost to be a Resident?

This Residency costs a sincere commitment to see where God may be calling, but Residents do not pay for their time in NBA XPLOR. Houses are set up to allow Residents to live modestly on a monthly stipend, with housing and utilities provided by the Host Congregation(s).

8. What about health insurance and deferment of student loans during NBA XPLOR?

Residents who are not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy may become part of a group policy through the Catholic Volunteer Network. For student loans, NBA offers guidance for approaching a lender to request student loan deferment. Although loan deferment is not guaranteed, programs like NBA XPLOR have had great success in achieving deferment.

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9. Can I work an extra job or be enrolled in additional college courses during NBA XPLOR?

The XPLOR experience involves a very strong commitment of building relationships and investment in the growth and exploration that happens in these 10 months. However, a Resident may enroll in up to one college course. Working an outside job beyond the internship is not permissible.

10. What is the application process for NBA XPLOR?

If you are interested in NBA XPLOR, please submit the online interest form, and we will contact you promptly. Each year, the online application goes live on our website in November and closes the following February.

NBA XPLOR is deeply rooted in the mission of the National Benevolent Association: *Following God's call, the National Benevolent Association exists to inspire and connect the people and ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to accompany one another in the creation of communities of compassion and care, and to advocate for the well-being of humanity.*

We also claim our mission through a deep connection to the **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** identity statement: *We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.*

***Interested in learning more about NBA XPLOR? Are you a young adult interested in applying?
Are you part of a church community interested in getting involved? Contact us!***

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