

Frequently Asked Questions: Family Services Expansion Grant

The Application

- **How do I apply?**

For each grant award, you must submit all components listed in the submissions section of the grant guidance. With each grant submission, the Local Partnership must provide the cover form (provided) that outlines all of the awards for which the applicant is applying. Submissions should be emailed to Zack Catoe (zcatoe@scfirststeps.org) by 5pm on August 7.

- **What is the length of the statement of need?**

The statement of need should start at the bottom of the cover form and can be as long as the Local Partnership deems necessary. The cover form will be considered page 1 of the grant submission. No grant submission, whether applying for one award type or combined, should be longer than 12 printed pages.

- **How should my grant be formatted?**

Reviewers requested for the grant to be single spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman, with 1" margins. If applying for multiple grant award types, please indicate that on the cover form. It's best to organize sections in your submission in the SAME order as outlined in the submission section of the guidance.

- **How do I budget for an AmeriCorps Member?**

Training and the living allowance (stipend) of the Member will be covered by the grant. The SCFS finance team will be supporting the bi-monthly (twice a month) distribution of the living allowance (stipend).

Mileage is covered for the Parent Educator AmeriCorps Members (Parent Educator Award) implementing HIPPIUSA through the AmeriCorps grant. For the Community Outreach and Education AmeriCorps Members (Community Outreach Award) and Family Support AmeriCorps (Family Support Award), Local Partnerships must budget for mileage at the Federal reimbursement.

When budgeting for your grant submission, budget for activities that were not listed above. For example, if your team participates in a local team training seminar every year and you want your Member to attend, that is an activity not included in the grant budget and will have to be included in your localized budget.

We encourage these types of activities for Members to support their development and suggest that the Local Partnership ensures that their budget matches all activities listed in the Member Experience section under grant submissions in the guidance.

- **What costs may I include in the budget? Can I include administrative costs?**

For both the Parenting Program Expansion Award (up to \$78,500 per year) and the Parent Educator AmeriCorps Award (\$7,000 per requested Member), the local partnership's proposed budget may include DIRECT costs as well as a proportionate share of ALLOCATED COSTS (Personnel, Operations), in the same manner as cost allocation is done currently in the

partnership's Budget Spending Plan. The percentage of allocated costs charged to the project should be in line with similarly sized programs that the partnership currently operates.

The AmeriCorps Awards- Parent Educator, Family Support, Community Outreach

- **Who are AmeriCorps Members?**

AmeriCorps Members are individuals enrolled for a specific term of service with an AmeriCorps program. The term of service is between 300 and 1700 hours. AmeriCorps Members are engaged in National Service and are not volunteers or employees. They play a unique role in a community or organization to address unmet needs. Eligible AmeriCorps Members can receive a living allowance, health insurance and childcare assistance to support them during their term of service. In addition, AmeriCorps Members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successfully completing a term of service.

Childcare scholarships can be offered to the AmeriCorps Member at the discretion of the Local Partnership. If interested in providing this recruitment incentive, please include in your budget summary.

- **What are AmeriCorps Member prohibited activities?**

AmeriCorps is nonpartisan. Service activities Members may **NOT** engage in while charging time to the AmeriCorps grant, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise include:

1. Political Advocacy- **including Census outreach**
2. Religious Activity
3. Benefiting a For-Profit Entities
4. Voter Registration
5. Abortion Services

- ❖ Local Partnerships sometimes host community meetings at churches, Members can conduct approved services activities (listed in the position overview outlined in Appendix A) at a church that is solely being used for the purpose of a meeting location. Members are not allowed to lead prayer or other religious activities during service hours or while conducting a community meeting at the host church.

- ❖ Members can complete clerical/ administrative tasks that connect to the completion of their direct service. Example: Family Support AmeriCorps Members can answer phones and file forms from the referrals they completed OR Parent Educator AmeriCorps Members can input data for families served.

- **What is the age and education requirement for the AmeriCorps Member?**

Members in the SC First Steps AmeriCorps program should be a minimum of 21 years old and have a high school diploma or equivalent for all three position types. There is not a maximum age for an AmeriCorps Member. Individuals who are 55 years of age or older are able to transfer their education award to a family member if they have no outstanding student loan debt or do not desire continue their education.

- **What is an education award and who will distribute those funds?**

Education award funds are provided and distributed by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) after the completion of the Member's term of service (which is outlined in the Member Agreement). The Member Agreement defines the term of service and serves as a contractual acknowledgement between the program and Member outlining how many hours and the number of weeks the Member will serve.

- **What will happen if a Member cannot complete their term of service?**

A Member may want to leave service for a number of reasons. For medical or family emergencies, the Member can request to leave the program by filing a Compelling Personal Circumstances (CPC) request form. Once the request form is submitted along with the appropriate documentation to the AmeriCorps Coordinator, then the request will be forwarded to the AmeriCorps Commission for review. If approved, the Member will receive a prorated education award. However, the living allowance will not continue past the Member's last day of service. Example: Getting a new job or pregnancy is not considered a CPC. If a Member develops an illness or is injured and cannot complete service, then they will be approved for a CPC.

If a Member chooses to leave the program before the term outlined in the Member Agreement is complete, then the Member forfeits the education award and will no longer receive their living allowance (stipend).

- **Who will recruit Members?**

Members will be recruited by EVERYONE. The Member should come from the local community. Recruitment toolkits will be created and provided to the Local Partnership to support the recruitment of Members. The AmeriCorps Coordinator will service as an aide to Local Partnerships and will work to develop statewide strategic partnerships to help with recruitment.

Member position descriptions will be posted on LinkedIn, Indeed, Idealist, SCFS website, and other volunteerism boards.

- **What will be the selection process for Members?**

Individuals interested in the program will be guided to the application located on the SCFS website. Once the application is received, the AmeriCorps Coordinator will complete the initial screening of the applicant via phone or zoom call. The screening will be for eligibility based on the AmeriCorps Commission standards and the specific desires of the Local Partnership.

After the initial screening, reviewed candidates will be sent to the Local Partnership for final interviewing and selection. The Local Partnership will communicate their candidate selection to the AmeriCorps Coordinator for the Member Agreement and background checks to be completed. When the background check is cleared, the Local Partnership will receive notification from the AmeriCorps Coordinator outlining the Members' start date.

- **Who will supervise the Member?**

Members are primarily supervised by someone identified at the Local Partnership. All timesheets require two signatures- one from a site supervisor and another from the AmeriCorps Coordinator. America Learns is the timekeeping system that will be used to support this effort. In this case the Local Partnership point of contact will be considered the Site Supervisor for the AmeriCorps Member.

The Local Partnership Site Supervisor will be asked to complete 30 min check-ins with AmeriCorps Member bi-weekly, and review timesheet submissions weekly.

For Local Partnerships interested in the Parent Educator Award, HIPPYUSA requires all Members to receive 1 hour of imagination role play training weekly. To support Local Partnership capacity, there are two options.

Option 1: Identify a staff person for the Member to contact routinely for support. The same point of contact can be HIPPY trained to provide the weekly 1 hour of imagination role play training. Funds for HIPPY training is provided by the grant and will not have to be budgeted locally.

Option 2: If capacity is a challenge, the Local Partnership can choose to have the HIPPY Coordinator in Columbia complete the weekly 1 hour of imagination role play training. However, a staff member will need to be identified for routine support of the Member.

- **How will Member activities be adjusted for COVID-19?**

Parent Educator AmeriCorps Members can provide the HIPPYUSA curriculum (home visitation program) through virtual service delivery. Using CDC guidelines along with HIPPYUSA adjusted curriculum, the Member will be equipped to remain safe during their service. (Please see guidance the attached virtual service guidelines from HIPPYUSA)

Family Support and Community Outreach and Education AmeriCorps members will be able to attend virtual conferences, follow up with family referrals, and/or develop and execute webinars to educate the community about Local Partnership program offerings. These are the adjustments to service to ensure that performance metrics can be met in a virtual service world.

All AmeriCorps Members will receive masks and hand sanitizer as part of their welcome package after orientation.

- **What are eligible activities for the AmeriCorps Members?**

Members are allowed to complete activities outlined in Appendix A for each position description. Local Partnerships are able to outline additional trainings for Members to support them in with service activities. Additionally, Local Partnerships are able to outline local professional development opportunities for their Member and placed into the Local Partnership's projected budget.

- **When should an AmeriCorps Member be considered?**

A Local Partnership should be considered if there are challenges with capacity and a desire to increase the number of families served. For the Parent Educator Award, this is a great opportunity to elevate or establish relationships with FS4K providers and families.

AmeriCorps members are great way “to get things done” for your local community.