

Literacy First Tutor FAQs

1. When does the program start?

The service year begins on September 4th. All Literacy First tutors will serve with the program for 10 months from September 4th through June 30.

2. What types of hours will I be expected to serve?

Tutors are required to serve Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at their assigned elementary school. Additional service hours are accumulated after school by becoming involved in school programs, volunteering with partnership organizations in the community, and participating in 3-4 community service projects throughout the year. All tutors are expected to serve an average of 45-46 hours each week in order to complete 1700 hours of service by June 30.

3. Is this a paid or volunteer position?

Literacy First is an AmeriCorps service position, not a permanent full-time position. Tutors are hired on a yearly basis to serve with Literacy First for 10 months.

4. Can I attend school and be a Literacy First tutor?

Yes, some of our tutors have taken one or two classes during their service term. However, classes cannot be taken during the school day nor can they conflict with any additional Literacy First trainings or service projects. It is important to remember that serving as a Literacy First tutor is a very big commitment. Some tutors have found it exhausting keeping up with both their service commitment and classes, especially at the beginning of their service term.

5. Can I have a part-time job and work with Literacy First?

Yes, several Literacy First tutors have taken on part-time jobs to supplement their living allowance. This additional job cannot occur during the school day or conflict with any additional Literacy First trainings or service projects.

6. Where would I serve?

Literacy First tutors serve in one of the following areas: North/Central Austin, South/Central Austin, or Pflugerville (a city just northeast of Austin). Literacy First serves 32 elementary schools in Central Texas and places each tutor at a school that is within reasonable commuting distance from their place of residence.

7. When will I be placed at a school?

Literacy First tutors are assigned to an elementary school at the end of their pre-service orientation in early September. We attempt to place tutors at a school that is within reasonable commuting distance from their place of residence. Literacy First places 2-4 tutors at each school.

8. What does it mean to be a bilingual tutor?

Texas school districts in Austin and surrounding areas offer bilingual education in the early grades. Bilingual Literacy First tutors instruct K-2 students in Spanish and must be proficient in reading, writing and speaking Spanish. Bilingual tutors also tutor children in English.

9. What's the relationship between Literacy First and AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs across the country that meet critical needs relating to education, public health, public safety, environmental stewardship, disaster relief, veterans initiatives and others areas of community support. Literacy First is an early literacy program that is a grant recipient of the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps). By becoming a Literacy First tutor you are also becoming an AmeriCorps member and committing to serve your country and community for 10 months.

10. What's the relationship between Literacy First and The University of Texas at Austin?

Literacy First is a program of the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin but does not receive operating funds from UT. Individuals as well as grants from foundations, corporations, and government bodies support Literacy First. We benefit greatly from being part of a major research university whose resources include researchers and infrastructure support. Tutors are not considered employees of The University of Texas of Texas at Austin.

11. I have served with AmeriCorps before. Am I still eligible for another year of service?

Maybe. Individuals can serve up to four terms in an AmeriCorps program. Please know that you can only earn the equivalent of two full-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards. Therefore, members will not receive an education award after serving for two full terms.

12. What does research-based lessons mean?

Literacy First uses "best-practices" in reading instruction. "Best-practice" means the teaching methods used in our instruction have been shown by research to be the most effective. In addition, our lessons and interventions are driven by data collected on individual students.

13. Does Literacy First provide housing?

Housing is not provided by Literacy First, nor is there a moving allowance for relocating. We provide all new members with a housing guide to help assist them with their transition to the Austin area. Additionally, Literacy First connects all new members with other AmeriCorps members in Austin through a listserv and an online social group. This online social group has traditionally been a good forum for new members to find housing opportunities along with other AmeriCorps members.

14. What is the dress code?

Members wear a Literacy First name tag along with one of the following shirts during their work week:

- AmeriCorps t-shirt or hoodie, Literacy First t-shirts (provided by Literacy First at no cost to you)
- School t-shirt
- Appropriate college/university t-shirt

Members must wear [bottoms and shoes that are deemed appropriate, per the Austin Independent School District.](#)

15. Does Literacy First provide health care coverage?

Yes, all Literacy First tutors that are not already covered by another health insurance policy will be enrolled in the Corps Network Health Insurance, which is underwritten by Cigna. Literacy First pays the monthly premium, however, all copays and out-of-pocket costs are the responsibility of the Member. Dental & vision coverage is not included. For more information about the Corps Network Health Insurance, visit the [Corps Network website](#).