



## AMERICORPS TUTOR FAQ

### 1. When does the program start?

The 2021-2022 service year begins on September 1st, 2021. All Literacy First tutors will serve with the program for 9 Months from September 1st, 2021 through May 27th, 2022.

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

Tutors are required to serve Monday through Friday from 7:30AM-2:30PM (3QT) or 7:30AM-1:30PM (HT) at their assigned elementary school.

Additional service hours can be earned after school by volunteering with after-school programs, other 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 35 (3QT) or 30 (HT) hours each week in order to complete 1200 (3QT) or 900 (HT) hours of service by May 27th, 2022.

### 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 9 Months. To see current stipend amounts click [here](#).

### 4. What is the Education Award for each position?

For the 2021-2022 service year, three quarter-time members will earn an education award of \$4441.50 upon successful completion of 1200 service hours. Half-time members will earn an education award of \$3172.50 upon successful completion of 900 service hours.

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

Yes, every year we have a handful of Literacy First tutors that have taken on part-time jobs to supplement their living allowance. However, this additional job cannot occur during the school day or conflict with any additional Literacy First training or service projects.



## 6. Where would I serve?

Literacy First tutors serve across 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 may have the chance to tutor children in English as well.

## 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 other areas of community support. Literacy First is an early literacy program that is a grant recipient of AmeriCorps. By becoming a Literacy First tutor you are also becoming an AmeriCorps member and committing to serve your country and community for 9 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, foundations, corporations, and government bodies all support Literacy First. 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 with AmeriCorps. 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-time 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, members can connect with other AmeriCorps members in Austin through the Austin AmeriCorps Housing and Networking Facebook group. This 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?

Literacy First requires members to dress in "business casual." We will provide members with a Literacy First polo, t-shirt, sweatshirt, and name tag. Members must wear their name tag while serving and it must be visible. Additionally, the dress code does vary from school to school. For example, some schools allow members to wear jeans every day, while others may only allow members to wear jeans on Fridays. Members will learn about their school's individual dress code, when they arrive at their assigned campus..

### 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.

### 16. How much support and what type of support will be provided?

Literacy First is dedicated to providing intensive, continued training and support to our AmeriCorps members. Our tutors begin the year as unskilled literacy advocates and end the year as early childhood literacy experts. All AmeriCorps members participate in Pre-Service Training, where they learn the fundamental skills necessary to be successful in their service term. At Literacy First, the first week of the service term is spent together as an entire cohort, meeting peers and colleagues, getting to know the staff, team-building, and learning about the program. Tutors are given training materials and curriculum, and receive expert coaching and plenty of practice time to learn our systems, policies and procedures.

At the end of Pre-Service Training, you will be assigned to a school campus and learn who your teammates, leader and supervisor will be. Leaders are returning members who will tutor alongside new tutors, providing support and guidance. Literacy First Supervisors serve as literacy coaches for our tutors, and will visit each campus at least once a week to provide support and ongoing feedback throughout the year.

Many of our tutors move to Austin specifically to serve with Literacy First and may not have a support system here when they arrive. Literacy First is committed to helping you find friends and establish an 'Austin family'. Upon accepting a position with Literacy First, our recruiter will invite you to join two Facebook groups; one for incoming Literacy First tutors, and one for all Austin AmeriCorps members (350 across eight programs).

Our program also believes in investing in our tutors across service years; we offer additional leadership development for returning members, and as a result, see roughly 25% of our cohort return to serve a second (or third or fourth) term of service. We employ our returning members to serve as ambassadors for their new teammates by posting on the Facebook page and inviting them to social gatherings to cultivate a community of support. Our tutors find lifelong friends through service, ensuring that you will have a successful and meaningful experience.

**17. Can Literacy First verify my employment?**

Literacy First can provide accepted members with an employment verification letter to secure housing for example. Please reach out to our recruiter for more information.

**18. Can Literacy First help me financially before my start date?**

Unfortunately, no.

**19. How do I apply for SNAP benefits (food stamps)?**

A SNAP representative will give a presentation at pre-service training and will instruct you on how to make a virtual appointment with them.

**20. My question wasn't answered, who can I reach out to?**

Please reach out to our recruiter at [literacyfirst@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:literacyfirst@austin.utexas.edu). They are happy to help!