



AMERICORPS TUTOR FAQ

1. When does the program start?

The service year begins on September 1st every year. All Literacy First tutors will serve with the program for 9 months from September through May.

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

Tutors are required to serve Monday through Friday at their assigned elementary school. To see the current positions and times available click [here](#). Additional service hours can be earned after school by volunteering with after-school programs, other partner organizations in the community, and participating in 3-4 community service projects throughout the year.

3. Is this a paid or volunteer position?

Literacy First is an AmeriCorps program. This means tutors will serve with the organization and receive a monthly living stipend and an education award at the end of their service term. To see current stipend amounts click [here](#).

4. How much will the education award be?

To see the current dollar amount for the Segal Education Award, visit the AmeriCorps website: americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more

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

Yes, every year we have a handful of 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 training or service projects.



6. Where do tutors serve? When do tutors find out their school placement?

Tutors serve across the Austin area. The elementary schools we serve vary each year. Staff will do their best to place each tutor at a school that is within reasonable commuting distance from their place of residence. Tutors are assigned to an elementary school at the end of their pre-service orientation in early September. Each campus will have a team of 2-4 people.

7. What does it mean to be a Bilingual tutor?

Bilingual tutors will be primarily instructing and teaching students to read in Spanish. Spanish-speaking students that qualify for the program are in a dual language (One-Way Spanish or Two-Way Spanish) classroom setting. Bilingual tutors will be set up for success with scripted lesson plans and ongoing weekly Spanish support. Bilingual tutors must have basic proficiency skills in speaking, reading, and writing Spanish. Bilingual tutors may have the chance to tutor children in English as well. For more information on the Bilingual programs in AISD click [here](#).

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

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs 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. Literacy First tutors are AmeriCorps members and commit to serving for 9 months. For more information about AmeriCorps click [here](#).

9. What's the relationship between Literacy First and The University of Texas at Austin (UT)?

Literacy First is a program of the [Charles A. Dana Center](#) at UT but does not receive operating funds from the university. Individuals, as well as grants, foundations, corporations, and government bodies all, support Literacy First. Tutors are considered non-employees of UT.

10. What if someone has served with AmeriCorps before? Are they still eligible for another year of service?

Maybe. Individuals can serve up to four terms with AmeriCorps and earn the equivalent of two full-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards. If someone has already served two full-time terms, they will not receive an education award but are still eligible for service.

11. What are research-based lessons?

Literacy First uses teaching methods that have been shown by research to be the most effective. In addition, lessons and interventions are driven by data collected on individual students.

12. Does Literacy First provide housing?

Housing is not provided by Literacy First, nor is there a relocation travel allowance. We provide all new tutors with a [housing guide](#) to help assist them with their transition to the Austin area. Additionally, tutors can connect with other AmeriCorps members that will be serving in Austin through the [Austin AmeriCorps Housing and Networking Facebook group](#). This group has traditionally been a good avenue to find housing opportunities along with other AmeriCorps members.

13. What is the dress code for tutors?

Literacy First requires tutors to dress in “business casual.” We will provide tutors with a Literacy First polo, t-shirt, sweatshirt, and name tag. Tutors 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 tutors to wear jeans every day, while others may only allow tutors to wear jeans on Fridays. Tutors will learn about their school’s dress code when they arrive at their assigned campus.

14. 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 tutor. Dental & vision coverage is not included. For more information about the Corps Network Health Insurance plan, visit [The Corps Network website](#).

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

Literacy First is dedicated to providing intensive, continued training and support to tutors. Tutors begin the year as unskilled literacy advocates and end the year as early childhood literacy experts. 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 while also receiving expert coaching from staff.

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

The program invests in tutors across service years by offering additional leadership development for returning tutors. Typically, 25% of the cohort will return to serve a second (or third or fourth) term of service. We encourage returning tutors to serve as ambassadors for their new teammates by posting on the cohort's Facebook page and inviting them to social gatherings to cultivate a community of support. Tutors find lifelong friends through service, ensuring that they will have a successful and meaningful experience.

16. Can Literacy First verify my employment?

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

17. Can Literacy First help tutors financially before their start date?

Unfortunately, no.

18. How do tutors apply for SNAP benefits (food stamps)?

A SNAP representative will give a presentation at pre-service training and will instruct tutors on how to apply for SNAP.

Need More Information?

Please reach out to the recruiter at literacyfirst@austin.utexas.edu.

They are happy to help!