



AFC/AIDS United AmeriCorps Program
Host agency Technical Assistance Meeting
February 3, 2015
3:30-5:00PM
Notes

A community TA meeting was held on February 3rd at the IDEA Center at Playhouse Square for the AFC to discuss the AmeriCorps host agency RFA for 2015.

AFC staff reviewed the history of AIDS United/AFC relationship and selection of AmeriCorps sites. Staff described the relationship between the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), AIDS United (AU), and the AIDS Funding Collaborative, as well as an overview of member benefits and expectations regarding member positions at HA. *In order to provide the most comprehensive assistance to applicant agencies, information and Q&A from the 2014 TA meeting is also included in these notes.*

- AIDS United is a non-profit organization that provides funding, advocacy and leadership nationally through initiatives like the Syringe Access Fund, the Community Partnership (CP) program (AFC is an example of an AIDS United CP) and an AmeriCorps program. AIDS United has facilitated their AmeriCorps program for 20 years. It was the first and is the broadest reaching service program focused on HIV prevention and care in the country, and over 750 AmeriCorps members have served through the program.
- The AFC was selected as 1 of 7 national Operating Sites (OS) of AIDS United, and will be referenced as the "Cleveland Operating Site." Other OS include: Washington, DC, Chicago, IL, Indianapolis, IN, Atlanta, GA, Albuquerque/Santa Fe, NM, and New Orleans, LA.
- Host agencies (HA) are selected *locally* through the RFA process, will contract directly with AIDS United and will have an MOU with the AFC, outlining relationship expectations. There will be six (6) AmeriCorps members available to the Cleveland HIV community. The members will also contract directly with AIDS United and are selected by OS's through a competitive, *national* application process.
- HA will be responsible for orientation, primary supervision, mentorship support, and training of AmeriCorps members.
- HA should expect members to be new/emerging professionals and to provide on-boarding and placement-specific training to the members, along with mentorship and coaching to develop their skills in a professional setting.
- All AmeriCorps members receive content training prior to their first day at placements.

- All AmeriCorps members will receive benefits including \$14,000 annual living allowance (paid monthly and taxed), \$5,730 educational award upon completion of service, health insurance, and child care (if applicable).
- All AmeriCorps members must accrue 1,700 hours and complete 11 months of service to be eligible for the full education award.
- All AmeriCorps members will be at their placements four days per week and will participate in the weekly team-based day, called “Fifth Day,” to perform service in the community, team building, and plan their Long Term Project. Host Agencies are encouraged to provide “Fifth Day” opportunities for the team throughout the year.
- HA will be required to match \geq \$1,000 per member for the service year, paid to the AFC upon MOU signing. The HA match will contribute to the AFC’s match to AU towards each member’s living allowance.
- Placement Descriptions describe the work the AmeriCorps member will be engaged in. It should be HIV focused, intended to build or enhance the organizations capacity for HIV work, and be inclusive of one or more of the Target Service Areas (below).
- Target Service Areas:*
 - a. Prevention Outreach
 - b. Prevention Education
 - c. HIV Testing and Counseling
 - d. Health Care Access
 - e. Client Support Services
 - f. Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination
- Limitations on AmeriCorps members service include CNCS Prohibited Activities (outlined in detail in the RFA; Appendix B) not displacing any past, current, or future paid staff or volunteers nor can the members perform more than 10% of their time on fundraising, 20% on general administration, or 20% in training, proportionately to their time.
- AmeriCorps members, HA, and their AmeriCorps member “matches” will be finalized by July 31st – all AmeriCorps members will be required to attend the week-long AIDS United/AmeriCorps pre-service training in Indianapolis, Aug 9–13, 2015.
- AmeriCorps members will attend Welcome Week in Cleveland, Aug 19–21, 2015 (e.g. local orientation and training). Additional training and team building will occur as part of Fifth Day activities throughout the year.
- AmeriCorps members will report to their Host Agencies on Monday, August 24, 2015 for their first day at placements.

*All key service areas must have a clear and direct HIV focus (more information following in Q&A). Additionally, they are outlined in detail in the RFA; Appendix A.

AFC staff also encouraged organizations to review the documents and access further resources available on the web (www.AIDSFundingCollaborative.org):

- Fact Sheets
- RFA and Applications
- High Impact Prevention
- MMWR 2011 Prevention Through Care and Treatment (“Treatment Cascade”)
- Example Contracts
- Example Service Placement descriptions

Q&A (including FAQ from 2014–2015):

1. Do members need a college degree?

No. Although most applicants tend to be college graduates, members are only required to have a high school diploma or equivalence.

2. Can members work with youth populations (e.g. DCFS youth aging out of systems)?

Yes. Working with youth at high risk for HIV transmission is encouraged. According to the 2013 Epidemiological Profile for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, 42% of new infections were among youth aged 13–29.

3. How many service member will be on the team and are agencies allowed to apply for more than one placement?

There will be six (6) members for the 2015–2016 service year. Yes, agencies are allowed to apply for more than one placement and must provide a separate placement description for each member requested. Further application guidance may be found within the RFA.

4. Can you provide more guidance regarding service members NOT replacing paid staff?

If an existing staff person leaves, they cannot be replaced by an AmeriCorps service member. In reference to “future” staff, this is specific to outstanding job openings. An exception would be if an agency lost funding for a paid staff.

AmeriCorps service members are intended to add or build capacity, not replace staff. Situations where programs or projects are seeded utilizing AmeriCorps service members (capacity building) with the potential or intention to hire staff in the future (sustainability planning), is acceptable and in some cases, assumed.

Clarification may be needed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Lindsay Marcus, City Supervisor for the Cleveland Operating Site at AFC (lmarcus@communitysolutions.com) for more information.

5. Regarding the prohibition of condom distribution on school grounds outlined in the “Member Prohibited Activities” document, does that include colleges and universities?

No, it does not include colleges and universities. Condom distribution is prohibited ONLY on K-12 public school grounds. It is up to the host agency to determine their own policy regarding condom distribution to youth in a community-based setting.

6. Voter registration is a prohibited activity, however electronic Medicaid and Medicare enrollment includes voter registration opt in/out in order to complete the process. How should members handle this when assisting clients?

Members are explicitly prohibited from participating in voter registration drives. Further clarification specific to electronic Medicaid/Medicare enrollment has been requested and will be shared once obtained.

7. Regarding the prohibited activities, how do you train the next generation of social justice professionals without advocacy experience?

The service team is able to gain a better understanding of the population they are service and can do more in the future as advocates.

8. Do the service members receive cultural competency or diversity training?

Yes. At the 2014 Pre-Service Training, the entire cohort of AIDS United AmeriCorps members receive an afternoon of HIV-specific diversity training. Additionally, during the 2014 Welcome Week, The Diversity Center of NEO provided an afternoon of diversity training during Welcome Week, focusing on unconscious bias within healthcare settings. The AFC plans to include diversity training in its 2015 Welcome Week activities.

9. Can you be more specific in defining what “in the field” and “administrative” work mean? We understand that at least 80% of the Member’s work must be done “in the field” however some field work requires administrative work (i.e.: case documentation, data entry, event logistics, and so forth).

There is not a time limit for administrative work related to HIV specific responsibilities, especially if administrative work is inherent to field work (e.g., case documentation, data entry).

There is also an understanding that AmeriCorps members may have a role outside of HIV in their project, considered general administration, and must be limited to no more than 20% of the members time; host agencies can and should vary the HIV work in the proposed position descriptions (e.g. not just HIV testing, but maybe HIV testing on Monday and Wednesday and another HIV-specific activity on T/Th) to create a comprehensive job description to fill four days and build and/or expand HIV capacity of the agency. Examples job descriptions can be found on the web site.

10. In the 80% of in the field work, does that include the 5th day?

No, 5th days are more flexible opportunities to explore service community in the area. Members may utilize HIV skills in other ways such as sharing/learning with another AmeriCorps team in service area doing work unrelated to HIV.

11. Will AmeriCorps service members have access to transportation?

The Cleveland Operating Site requires that service members have a car for transportation. The reimbursement policy for mileage accrued for AmeriCorps member placement-related travel should mirror that of other employees. If an organization uses its own vehicle(s) and the AmeriCorps member is expected to drive them, the policy around ensuring appropriate training, insurance, etc., should again mirror that of paid employees.

12. If a member's host agency site provides other services that are not HIV specific, what percentage of time may the Member spend? Example: organizations serving a broad population.

If agency model is holistic in terms of HIV service/prevention, it is OK, e.g., a food pantry at an ASO is justified vs. a food pantry at Cleveland Food Bank (which is not), unless there is some specific liaison role or direct connection to ASO's so the benefit is for individual living with HIV. The AmeriCorps member's primary role is to build or enhance community HIV capacity and must have a clear and direct HIV focus.

13. Can you provide clarification or insight for an organization like Planned Parenthood (PP), which provides comprehensive reproductive health care/education that includes HIV prevention as well as abortion services, on their eligibility to become a host agency? e.g., can a member work in the same building (even if on separate floors) as abortion services? Can a member educate the public about the range of services (inclusive or exclusive of abortion) that PP provides? Has PP ever been a host agency in other Operating Sites?

PP has been a HA in the past with varying success; because of the Corporation's prohibited activities list and PPs comprehensive scope, they must be monitored carefully and with support from AU. Re: the example of a patient asking an AmeriCorps member

in a PP bldg which floor abortion services are on, it is recommended that the member refer the patient to other staff person to answer the question.

14. What is the age range for AmeriCorps members?

There is no upper limit for age of a member and 17 is the youngest that a member can be when applying.

15. What is the monitoring schedule like between the AU, AFC, and host agencies?

AFC staff will conduct two site visits: one initial site visit at the start of the service year and one mid-year site visit at the beginning of 2015. The AFC will convene closing reception as well as an end of year de-brief for host agencies. AFC staff will be in regular communication with host agencies and Members and will act as an ongoing resource for both members and host agencies. AFC staff provide local program administration and act as a liaison to AIDS United.

Host agencies will be responsible for completing a risk management checklist, as well as mid- and end-of-year member performance evaluations and submission to AU.

Additionally, AU requests all Members complete an electronic mid- and end-of-year Member survey.

16. Can members attend national conferences?

Yes, on a case by case basis. Training that is not specific to the job description needs to be discussed with AFC staff in that the Operating Site needs to maintain equity regarding opportunities afforded service members.

17. Is the \$1,000 host agency match annual?

Yes. It will be required with the signed AFC MOU. In the case that an organization requests and is approved to host two AmeriCorps service members, a \$1,000 is required for each member.

18. Do agencies need to have a prior relationship with the Operating Site (AFC) to be eligible to apply?

No prior relationship is required for agencies to be eligible to apply.

19. If there is a discretionary snow day or for some other reason the host agency office closes, should the AmeriCorps member work from home?

AmeriCorps members should be subject to the same human resources policies as paid staff; if paid staff have a snow day, the AmeriCorps member is required to as well. The

exception is if the AmeriCorps member is interested in gaining additional service hours for the day; the member must work with their host agency supervisor to arrange this.

Please contact AFC staff Lindsay Marcus (lmarcus@communitysolutions.com) or Melissa Federman (mfederman@communitysolutions.com) or with any additional questions.

Applications are due on Friday, April 11th 2014 at Noon.