



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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State Literacy Program receives AmeriCorps Funding

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has awarded a one-year AmeriCorps grant of \$249,895 to Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. a non-profit organization in Little Rock, to support its Arkansas Reads program.

The grant is a portion of \$2,423,853 awarded to AmeriCorps programs in Arkansas as part of 2014 AmeriCorps State and National grant competition. Four other programs in Arkansas were awarded funding. The funds will be distributed through the Arkansas Service Commission, part of the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Community Service and Non-Profit Support.

This funding to the Arkansas Reads program will support the work of 40 AmeriCorps members. They will provide one-on-one basic literacy and English as a Second Language instruction to 725 economically disadvantaged adult learners. This will result in increased job opportunities, healthier lifestyles, increased involvement in their children's learning and more engaged citizens. The program serves adults in more than 60 counties in Arkansas.

"We're honored that we were chosen for continued funding of the Arkansas Reads program," said Arkansas Literacy Council, Inc. Executive Director Nancy Leonhardt. "This will allow us to continue to provide free tutoring services to Adult learners with low reading skills and increase the numbers of people we serve in 25-30 counties. We will also be able to increase the number of students in our English as a Second Language portion of the program." The program helps Arkansans develop skills that will assist them in obtaining employment or increase their skill levels in the work place. According to the Literacy Council's website, 43 percent of people with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty, 17 percent receive food stamps, and 70 percent have no job or part time job.

In addition to the grant funding, CNCS will make available \$112,880 in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards for the AmeriCorps members funded by this grant. After completing a full term of service, AmeriCorps members receive an award of \$5,645 that they can use to pay for college or to pay off student loans.

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Every day in communities across America, AmeriCorps members are making a powerful impact on the most critical issues facing our nation. Whether improving schools, fighting poverty, rebuilding after disasters, providing health services, preserving the environment, or supporting veterans and military families, AmeriCorps members are getting things done. Since the program's inception, more than 830,000 men and women have taken the AmeriCorps pledge, serving more than one billion hours and improving the lives of countless Americans. These funds will support the 20th anniversary class of AmeriCorps members.