



Media Release

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Arkansas AmeriCorps Receives National Grants

Five organizations in Arkansas have been awarded more than \$1 million combined in AmeriCorps grants that will support 250 AmeriCorps members working on projects that focus on education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, disaster services and military families, the Department of Human Services' Division of Community Service and Non-profit Support (DCSNS) announced Wednesday.

The Corporation for National and Community Service awarded the money as a result of AmeriCorps State and National Funding Competition. The grants will be dispersed by DCSNS during State Fiscal Year 2013.

"We are serving in the areas that need us the most, some of them very rural," said Mary Bea Gross with the Arkansas Service Commission, which is a unit of DCSNS. "Many of these projects have been in place for a while, so getting word that we'd receive funds to continue them was a huge relief."

The highest grant award, \$458,680, will cover the living expenses for 73 AmeriCorps members serving with the Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative Smart Start Program out of Monticello. The members will provide comprehensive support services addressing the educational needs of elementary schools in districts that do not have the resources to provide intensive tutoring to youth in need. They will focus on improving students' literacy and math competency, parental involvement, volunteer engagement and community service.

More than \$278,000 will go towards a project in the Rogers School District that provides translation and outreach services to Hispanic and Marshallese families in the area. Several other projects involve tutoring and other one-on-one services for children and adults throughout the central, southeast, and delta regions of the state.

The grant awards came despite a particularly competitive grant contest. Federal funding was reduced for this grant cycle and there was a strong demand from organizations seeking AmeriCorps resources.

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“We knew it was going to be tough so we spent a lot of time assisting the programs with their applications,” said Gross. “There are so many deserving programs that didn’t receive funding so we feel honored.”

Recruitment for AmeriCorps members begins in the summer with the programs beginning in the fall. Each of the AmeriCorps members will receive a living stipend while serving as well as the Segal Education Award after their term of service is completed. They also are eligible for other scholarships and educational incentives.

AmeriCorps is a service organization made up of adults across Arkansas and the nation. There are 80,000 AmeriCorps members across the country, with nearly 500 serving in Arkansas. Arkansas’s state AmeriCorps is a unit of DCSNS.