

Advisory Committee Meeting
2021-02-16

3:00 – 4:30

In attendance: Advisory Committee Members: Ruth Anne Hanahan, Erin Rosolina, Willa Essie, Alanna McKissack, Eden Slater, Sheila Lindsey, Stephanie Carlson, Jenna Bailey, Lizzie Gaver, and Connie Flachs. CAC AmeriCorps Staff and Members – Jason Scott, Christine Doka, Lauren Bird, Mark Carper, and Leah Fontaine.

1) Introductions:

New Advisory Committee Members:

Jenna Bailey: 2016-2017 alum, served at Beardsley Community Farm

Lizzie Gaver: 2016-2018 alum, served with Keep Sevier Beautiful and Sevier Solid Waste

Intern:

Deidra Rogers: 2017-2018 alum, served with CAC American Job Center; currently ETSU lecturer

2) Update of programs:

Environmental – In a continuation year, this program is moving into 3rd year. There have not been many changes. Funding and member numbers has been flat, but this year we've made a request from the state for an increase of wages to members for this next, final year of the grant cycle. We have also asked for an additional member, 51 rather than 50.

This year has brought problems with meeting performance requirements, including Environmental Education, and we are looking into a remote delivery option of that intervention and will compare that with the in-person intervention to see if there's any variation in the results.

Recruitment has been full for this year, although a few individuals have left for reasons related to COVID-19 reasons, which the state does not hold against us.

Mid-Year Retreat went well, with teambuilding, reconnecting, and resilience building activities, trivial pursuit being a favorite (low lift to members and most enjoyable portion).

VISTA – Grant was successfully submitted, and we've received a \$10,000 increase in support and two VISTA leaders, making for 30 members total in this program. We've also gained new partners: Alliance House, Cokesbury Church – Fig Tree, KCDC (Love Towers), Knox Education Foundation, SEED, Tennessee RiverLine, and Two Bikes (bike donor and fundraising). As for recruitment and retention, only one position was not filled (Office of Aging), but we've been able to move that to an August start date and will continue recruitment. Summer Associates will be for 6-10 weeks in length at existing sites, and it will include a summer feeding program.

Community Action Fellows – This program will have part-time service equaling 300 hours over 16 or 32 weeks. The combined living allowance and education award will equal \$4,500 value / term for members, and a person may complete several terms. The hope is to connect more people to national service, such as students, retirees, and those unable to commit full-time. The overarching theme of the program is COVID-19 recovery with two focuses: food security

(feeding people) and education with K-3 reading program, which is a priority focus for the state. We will find out in late May whether we will be awarded this grant, the same time at which we find out about funding increase request for Environmental program.

AmeriCorps Alums: Knoxville: <https://www.facebook.com/AmeriCorpsAlumsKnoxville/>

As a medium through which members can remain in contact after end of service, a key component will be the mentoring initiative, which connects current members with alums. As a community building forum, this may include symposiums and specialist programs (such as water quality, etc.). A pilot mentor program was rolled out at the mid-year retreat, and thus far there are 25 alums and 30 members that have signed up. The mentor to mentee model is a 1:6 or 8 ratio. This serves to connect members to each other as well as to mentors. Deidra has created a manual for mentors to serve as a guide for meetings and discussions. The kick off will be in March and it will run for 4 months to see what works and what doesn't so as to improve it for a fall 2021 roll out. A mentor agreement has been drafted, and one missing element that will be included in the future is a mentor orientation to better inform and train the mentors on how they can be of assistance.

Micro-Grants Program: An idea from the Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism, this proposed program would allow members to apply for and receive grants that can benefit members and organization even after member leaves and will bring resources to sites and projects. The total, annual funds available under current consideration is from \$1,500 to \$3,000, which would initially be provided by CAC AmeriCorps. Currently there is no minimum or maximum amount of award for projects.

Proposal that the Advisory Committee, as a 3rd party reviewer, would be the application approving body, and it's estimated to require 30 to 90 minutes of commitment. The possible benefits of this program include increased retention rate of members, grant writing experience, and source for presentations (required for grant). The selection may require recusal for some Committee members. Leah wants to meet with 2nd year members to ask how plausible this prospect is. Could be collaborative and may include multi-party applications.

Approaching Events

February 24th: All Corps Meeting

March, April, & May: Career Development (resume, mock-interviews, job fair)

Open Discussion: Eden Slater – Their VISTA member was very excited by the mentor program as a means of connecting to community, which has been more difficult to achieve this past year. Willa Essie, who is stepping down from her role, thanked everyone for the opportunity. We are thankful for her service and wish the very best for her.