

## **Advisory Committee Meeting**

2021-08-24

3:00 – 4:00

In Attendance: Committee Members: Alanna McKissack, Lizzie Gaver, Jenna Bailey, RuthAnne Hanahan, Haley Michael-Lee

Office: Jason Scott, Christine Doka, Lauren Bird, Leah Fontaine, Ashlee Mays, Cele Weakfall

### **General Introductions**

- Everyone on the call introduced themselves, including the new VISTA Leaders, Ashlee Mays and Cele Weakfall, and the new Member Representative, Haley Michael-Lee.

### **Recruitment of Committee Members**

- Sean Casey submitted a letter of interest to join the Advisory Committee as a community representative. He is a UT student in the FUTURE program and is served by a medley of members at UT and in the community.
- Leah read Sean's letter and sent a JotForm to vote on whether to add him to the committee or not

### **Summary of Orientation**

- Orientation was held in person at the Regas Building downtown. Members had the opportunity to explore downtown during lunch and break into subgroups.
- Headshots of members were taken and are expected to come back edited tomorrow, the 25<sup>th</sup>. We will provide these photos to members and use them for the website and social media.
- Haley: Orientation this year was better received by members due to it being in person. She felt more connected to the broad corps this year as last year she only interacted with the people she directly served with since everything else was virtual.

### **Ongoing Covid 19 Discussion (Added in during Meeting)**

- The first corps meeting will be over Zoom. We hope this doesn't continue and are looking for safe alternatives in smaller groups or outdoor spaces.
- The office operates with the most up-to-date guidelines from CAC and holds others to that standard at any events or meetings we host.
- Haley suggested hybrid all corps meetings. Everyone is on Zoom, but small groups get together to be together in person while on Zoom. Alana suggested the terraced garden at the Botanical Gardens due to its large size and tiered structure.

### **Update of programs**

Environmental

- The environmental corps is nearing full recruitment. The office was concerned about recruitment earlier in the year due to the current job market, but there are only a handful of spots left at this time.
- It's a big year for the Environmental corps because it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the grant. That means it's time to rewrite the grant and apply for funding. The first draft will be due in Oct and the final version in Dec. The results are announced in May. This year the grant will focus more on climate action rather than disaster preparedness due to the political climate.

#### VISTA

- 22 out of 30 slots are recruited. It has been harder to recruit for the VISTA corps, but the office continues virtual recruitment to fill the remaining 8.
- Two partner sites are being added to the roster. The Bottom Knox will gain a member focused on volunteer management and fundraising, and KCDC will receive a member focused on food insecurity and low-income housing.
- The semi-annual VISTA report is due at the end of September. VISTA Leaders will support the report.
- The VISTA grant is due around the end of November, so the office is currently looking for new partners interested in hosting a member.

#### Community Action Fellows (CAF)

- The office is still heavily recruiting for these with only 4 positions filled so far. There are still 11 positions with fall start dates open, either 10 or 20 hours a week. Unfortunately, funding and the official application portal came in late for this program, but the office hopes that recruitment will be easier going forward with those in place.
- The first-ever cohort of CAF was oriented on Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Local recruitment will be imperative for the success of this corps due to its part-time nature. Leah is doing outreach with local colleges, including reaching out to professors and tabling at career fairs. This will increase awareness of CAF and the program in general.
- Training is being set up for the Leaders for Reader performance metrics through Knox Education Foundation, and all members will support Mobile Meals initiatives.
- Jason- We are thrilled to receive funding, but it has been a challenge we are tackling to start this program up and learn what works and what doesn't. This year is about infrastructure, troubleshooting, and making it happen. We hope this program will provide more accessibility to service for those who can't devote a full-time year to service.

#### **Update on Initiatives**

##### Mentorship

- The first year-long program has launched, and groups will be announced by the first week of September. This will allow mentorship groups to meet ten times during the corps year.

- During orientation, members got to chat with mentors and alum over lunch to introduce them to support early on.

#### Community Impact Fund

- The Community Impact Fund is the small grants program launched this year. At future meetings, the Advisory Committee will vote on funding for member lead projects. The first will be in November.
- The members were enthusiastic about the opportunity when introduced to it during orientation. There are talks about fundraising for the fund, depending on the demand we receive.

#### AmeriCorps Alums: Knoxville

- The Alums chapter is doing well with over 100 people signed up for it and many offering their expertise or support for the community.
- Alum are invited to days of service.
- The office is hosting a movie night at the Parkway Drive-In on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 6-9 pm. The movie is *Coraline*.

#### Open Discussion

- The office will introduce Haley to the corps soon.
- The office offers three roles to members to have more input in the program, the corps ambassadors, media representatives, and service learning initiators.