

# Grant Continuation Report from Task Force

**Recommendation:** Approved with the condition that the Executive summary be corrected for year 3 and the source of funds be identified

**Legal Applicant:** Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

**Program Name:** First4 AmeriCorps

**Category:**  AC Formula  
 AC Competitive  
 Other Competition

**Type:**  Planning  
 Operating  
 Fixed Price  
 Ed Award Only

**Year in Grant Cycle:**  Year 1  Year 2  Year 3

**Continuation Dates:** Start: 9/1/21 End: 8/31/22

## New Resources for Continuation: Funds and Slots

	CNCS	Local Share	% change from prior year 38% grantee match;  the previous year the match was 35%, increase of 3%
<b>Operating</b>	\$108,360	\$65,651	
<b>Member Support</b>	\$107,219	\$14,597	
<b>Indirect (Admin)</b>	\$1,141	\$6,237	
<b>% sharing proposed</b>	62%	38%	
<b>% share required</b>		35%	
<b>Cost-per-member proposed (max allowed)</b>	\$16,300		

Total AmeriCorps Member Service Years: 7.09		Slot Types Requested						
		FT	HT	RHT	QT	MT	TQT	Total
<b>Slots With living allowance</b>			4	6			4	14
<b>Slots with only ed award</b>								

## Program Description (executive summary from grant application):

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program/Educare Central Maine proposes to have fifteen (15) AmeriCorps members (three (3) full time, five (5) reduced full time, and seven (7) half time members) who will be embedded into over thirty (30) early care and education classrooms at Educare Central Maine, throughout classrooms in our service area and in classrooms operated by our community partners. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will provide services to support approximately 150 disadvantaged preschool students and have a better understanding of trauma-informed teaching practices, Adverse Childhood Experiences and be able to support social-emotional development in children. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage a minimum of 150 parents who will be engaged in Conscious Discipline training and Adverse Childhood Experiences awareness. This program will concentrate on the CNCS focus area(s) of improving school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children. The CNCS investment of \$154,603 will be matched with \$83,242 in local/state.

## Service locations (new sites are italicized):

KVCAP (Waterville); they are looking to place AmeriCorps members in other center-based partner sites, namely Southern Kennebec Childhood Development Corporation (SKCDC), based in Farmingdale, with locations in Gardiner, Farmingdale, and Augusta, as well as Quimby Child Care Center in Norridgewock.

**Performance measures (targets and achievement for prior years; targets proposed for new year):**

**Trauma informed care**

Number of individuals served

Target: 150 [*next year target: 210*]

Actual: 117

Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

Target: 140 [*next year target: 160*]

Actual: 67

[Given the trauma of a global pandemic on their youth and that many of the children reported on saw regression in their Social-emotional development (with their in-person supports suspended for over 2 months) the number is better expected. The other aspect to consider here is the nature of the DRDP assessment. Each "step" that shows improvement is a mini spectrum all its own, and children must demonstrate sustained mastery of every aspect of a domain, so, for example, if they have demonstrated growth in 4 of 5 skills in the next "step," this data does not reveal that they made "gains" despite their growth/development.]

**Member Development**

Number of trainings

Target: 15

Actual: 15

Members demonstrating increased knowledge/skills/abilities

Target: 12

Actual: 10

**Strengthening Communities**

Hours of service contributed by volunteers

Target: 50

Actual: 8.25

[Though these volunteers were recruited in March, many of them did not begin their paired volunteering until late in March or early April, hence the low number here]

Number of children demonstrating secure attachment to volunteer

Target: 3

Actual: 0

[Mainly because the Colby volunteers are strictly remote/virtual, children have not had the opportunity to develop attachments to these young adults.]

Number of community volunteers

Target: 3

Actual: 3

[3 AmeriCorps members are working with 3 regular Colby College student volunteers (as well as 1 episodic volunteer, but our PM refers to regular) to create lessons/content for the children in our program. They are working together in pairs so that the Colby member creates/presents a virtual element--whether prerecorded or via Zoom--and the AmeriCorps member presents an in-person element of a lesson/activity.]

Performance measures: member development and strengthening communities the targets will remain the same.

### **Operating performance summary:**

All reports have been submitted on-time and any requests for information have been promptly delivered. The only issue that resulted in a corrective action plan was one of enrollment; the Program Director did not properly enroll a member. The PD now has a strategy to run a report from eGrants to verify that all members have been enrolled properly. There have been no further concerns with the program operations.

### **Enrollment/retention:**

Total number of filled slots: 12, Total number of granted slots: 15

Average enrollment rate: 80.000 % Average retention rate: 91.7%

The Three-Quarter Time (1200 hr) slot are the only ones that haven't been totally filled, they have 3 unfilled 1200-hour slots.

KVCAP's recruitment strategy has been to have members interview Site Mentors to spotlight the program as well as the importance/impact of members in the classrooms. They will use these in publications and as part of recruitment in addition to the newsletter.

First4's enrollment rate is below 100% this year mainly due to COVID-19. Ten out of 12 of the members recruited at the start of the program year were placed Educare Central Maine, just one of First4's sites. There are only 14 classrooms, and ECM is also one of the only places that will/is able to support ECE teachers in training for practicum placement. In addition to this, the other classrooms/sites in KVCAP's Head Start program are in district schools, and many of them were--and are--limiting the number of staff in the buildings and therefore would not allow extra personnel. So, to avoid completely overwhelming ECM, we basically had to halt recruitment at 12.

### **Compliance:**

There are no concerns or corrective actions currently.

### **Sponsor and program:**

KVCAP is working with Colby College's Office of Civic Engagement to support students' needs and desires to provide community service while also striving to reach their goal of increased capacity by recruiting volunteers. The Program Coordinator presented to Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation (SKCDC), one of KVCAP's partners, to discuss the possibility of placing First4 members in their facility. This will increase their geographical reach in terms of recruitment, as there are classrooms in Farmingdale, Gardiner, and Augusta. First4 member & Program Coordinator engaged in "Chamber Chatter" with the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce to discuss the work and impact of First4 AmeriCorps. A tremendous outreach opportunity to get members' stories/experiences out into the public eye with Member Monday highlights, Chamber Chatter interview, a member's Letter to the Editor, etc. have been tremendous outreach opportunities

### **Financial:**

Grantee financial support for the local match has contributed significantly to the success of this project, including associated staffing costs for the Project Coordinator, member trainings, member supplies and other member associated costs. It is important to note that due to COVID-19 KVCAP Child & Family Services has experienced revenue decline in childcare revenue which supports their childcare programs. This has had a substantial impact on the funds that help support their AmeriCorps Project Coordinator and related costs. It is to be noted that recent support from the State OCFS CRRSA and CARES Act funding will help stabilize funding for their programs. As discussed with CNCS, they are hopeful that the waiver of match requirements will be accepted and they anticipate taking advantage of this waiver in full or in part to help offset their losses and continuing to offer and provide AmeriCorps members with the commitment of quality and excellence throughout this difficult time.

### **Task Force Review Summary:**

Chair Barrett asked if there were any questions or comments about the application and review. There were none. The request is for funding set at \$108,360 Federal Share supporting 7.09 -member service years (MSY's) distributed over 14 slots with the proposed cost per member service year at \$15,283.50. A motion made by Barrett to forward the recommendation to the commission in the amount requested in year 3 for a vote. Second by L'Italien. Vote: In favor – Haines, Barczyk, Meinders, Tilton-Flood, L'Italien, Barrett. None opposed.