



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Andy Beshear, Governor

Eric Friedlander, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Governor Beshear Announces More Than \$4.19 Million to Build Public Health AmeriCorps in Kentucky**

***Funding will support 275 AmeriCorps members to meet public health needs of local communities and help rebuild the public health sector***

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (April 6, 2022) – Governor Andy Beshear today announced a public health grant of \$4,193,100 to expand the AmeriCorps presence in the commonwealth, a partnership between AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Supported by a five-year, \$400 million investment from the American Rescue Plan Act, Public Health AmeriCorps will help meet public health needs of local communities by providing surge capacity and support while also creating pathways to public health-related careers.

“Kentuckians deserve access to health care – a basic human right – and this funding will support the recruitment, training and development of a new generation of public health leaders,” said Gov. Beshear. “The funding will support the addition of community health workers with coordination from Serve Kentucky, the agency

committed to engaging Kentuckians in volunteerism and service to positively impact our communities.”

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Department for Public Health, said, “The 2.5+ million Kentuckians who have received vaccines or boosters have contributed to a critical turning point in the fight against COVID-19. The road to reaching our current low COVID-19 community rate has been neither easy nor without loss, and this grant allows us to plan for future public health emergency responses. Creating a standing corps of public health personnel to manage surge capacity and respond to crises will enable Team Kentucky to stand ready to support Kentuckians when emergencies arise.”

Funding has been awarded to the Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA) and Family Scholar House. With this new funding, KHDA will leverage the skills and experience of 75 AmeriCorps members who will serve as community health workers in local health departments in communities across Kentucky in core public health programs, including Health Access Nurturing Development Services, Women, Infant and Children and Harm Reduction programs. Family Scholar House will leverage 200 AmeriCorps members who will provide health care support to seniors and disabled individuals in health care facilities across Kentucky.

“After their year of service, we expect more than 200 AmeriCorps members will pursue future engagement in the public health sector,” said Eric Friedlander, secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, which administers and oversees Serve Kentucky. “Participants in Public Health AmeriCorps can gain a steppingstone into permanent jobs in the public health field. AmeriCorps and the CDC believe that Public Health AmeriCorps provides a unique way to expose those interested in learning more about public health and its various careers.”

“Adults of all ages and education backgrounds are eligible to serve in Public Health AmeriCorps,” said Joe Bringardner, executive director of Serve Kentucky. He noted that organizations are focused on recruiting AmeriCorps members with a

diverse range of lived experiences and who come from the communities or communities like the ones in which they will serve.

AmeriCorps continues to invest in the nation's COVID-19 recovery. With existing programs in more than 40,000 locations across the country, AmeriCorps is uniquely positioned to bolster community response efforts. For the past two years, thousands of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers across all 50 states and U.S. territories have continued their service, quickly adapting to meet the changing needs caused by the pandemic and have provided vital support, community response, and recovery efforts, providing support to more than 12 million Americans, including 2.5 million people at vaccination sites.

### **About the Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

[The Cabinet for Health and Family Services](#) is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including [Serve Kentucky](#), the [Department for Public Health](#), the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. The cabinet serves Kentuckians in all 120 counties with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.

### **About Serve Kentucky**

Serve Kentucky is a State Service Commission. In addition to overseeing the annual grant competition that awards funding to AmeriCorps State and other community service programs, State Service Commissions determine social needs in their states, set policy and program priorities, provide training and assistance, support national days of service and promote service and volunteering. Serve Kentucky funding is provided by the [AmeriCorps federal agency](#) and the Kentucky General Assembly. The [Cabinet for Health and Family Services](#) is the parent agency for the commission, providing administrative support and oversight.

## **About AmeriCorps**

[AmeriCorps](#), the federal agency for volunteerism and national service, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term or one-time volunteers.

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