

Effective on March 27, 1998, textile products in Categories 352/652, produced or manufactured in Honduras and exported on or after March 27, 1998 will no longer require a visa. In addition, products in Categories 352/652 will no longer be subject to the Special Access Program.

A description of the textile and apparel categories in terms of HTS numbers is available in the CORRELATION: Textile and Apparel Categories with the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (see **Federal Register** notice 62 FR 66057, published on December 17, 1997). Also see 61 FR 38236, published on July 23, 1996.

Troy H. Cribb,

Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements

March 24, 1998.

Commissioner of Customs,
Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20229.

Dear Commissioner: This directive amends, but does not cancel, the directive issued to you on July 18, 1996, as amended, by the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements. That directive directs you to prohibit entry of certain textile products, produced or manufactured in Honduras which were not properly visaed by the Government of Honduras.

Effective on March 27, 1998, you are directed to no longer require a visa for shipments of textile products in Categories 352/652 which are produced or manufactured in Honduras and exported on or after March 27, 1998. In addition, products in Categories 352/652 will no longer be subject to the Special Access Program.

The Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements has determined that these actions fall within the foreign affairs exception of the rulemaking provisions of 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(1).

Sincerely,

Troy H. Cribb,

Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

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CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Availability of Funds and Education Awards Under the AmeriCorps Education Awards Program

AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds and education awards under the

AmeriCorps Education Awards Program.

SUMMARY: The Corporation for National and Community Service (the "Corporation") seeks to expand opportunities for individuals to serve as AmeriCorps members and earn educational benefits, broaden the network of national service programs and strategies, increase the number of communities joining with AmeriCorps to better meet compelling local needs, and encourage additional non-federal resources to support national and community service.

Accordingly, the Corporation announces the availability of up to 10,000 education awards from the National Service Trust (the Trust) for national, state, and local community service programs that: (1) Can support most or all of the AmeriCorps member and program costs from sources other than the Corporation; (2) meet agreed-upon AmeriCorps program requirements; and (3) are judged to be high quality according to Corporation criteria, as highlighted below and set forth in the application materials. The education awards may be earned by AmeriCorps members successfully completing full-time, part-time, or reduced part-time terms of service in a community service program approved through this application process.

AmeriCorps Education Awards programs supported through this competition are expected to uphold standards of service quality, member support and program management similar to other AmeriCorps programs in order to maintain the integrity of the AmeriCorps National Service Network. However, the Corporation has modified certain AmeriCorps requirements and permits program sponsors greater management and operating flexibility. In addition, the Corporation will consider requests for up to \$500 per full-time member (pro-rated for part-time members) to manage these programs.

Potential program sponsors eligible to apply under this Notice include national nonprofit organizations, multi-state collaborations, State Commissions on National and Community Service (on behalf of local non-profit organizations, state and local units of government, other state-wide programs, and programs operating only within the state), institutions for higher education, and state education agencies.

Program and administrative requirements are set forth in the application guidelines issued by the Corporation.

DATES: Applications may be obtained on or after March 25, 1998. There are two separate competitions for funding with the following deadlines: April 23, 1998, and June 23, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Application materials and additional information may be requested from: AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, Corporation for National Service, 1201 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20525. Materials may also be requested by telephone, at 202/606-5000, ext. 417, or (TDD) 202/565-2700, and may be requested in an alternative format for the visually impaired.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Corporation is a federal government corporation that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. This service addresses the Nation's education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In doing so, the Corporation fosters civic responsibility, strengthens the ties that bind us together as a people, and provides educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

Pursuant to the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12501, *et seq.* (the Act), the Corporation may "support innovative and model programs." 42 U.S.C. 12653(b). In addition, an individual can receive an education award from the National Service Trust if, among other things, the individual "successfully completes the required term of service * * * in an approved national service position." 42 U.S.C. 12602. The Act defines an approved national service position to include six specific service positions and "such other national service positions as the Corporation considers to be appropriate." 42 U.S.C. 12573.

The AmeriCorps Education Awards Program was launched in the 1997 program year, during which 104 proposals were approved, representing approximately 14,000 service positions. Sponsors include national non-profit organizations, state commissions, institutions of higher education, state and local agencies, and local organizations. Program requirements and application guidelines have been refined based on the experience of this first year.

Program Eligibility and Design

The Corporation will accept applications from eligible applicants

proposing to sponsor a national service program that addresses unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs in the community served. The Corporation seeks high-quality programs that (1) "get things done" to meet local needs, (2) strengthen communities, and (3) develop members. Programs must establish specific objectives which are subject to the Corporation's approval.

The Corporation seeks programs that will support most or all program and participant costs (other than the education awards) through sources other than the Corporation. However, the Corporation will consider requests for up to \$500 per full-time member (pro-rated for part-time members) to manage the program and will fund all the approved education awards. A request for funds in addition to the education awards should only be made when necessary and may affect approval of the proposal due to lack of available funding. There is no match requirement under the AmeriCorps Education Award Program.

Programs will be required to cooperate with the Corporation and its evaluators in all its monitoring and evaluation efforts. Semi-annual program progress reports will be required. Member hours must be tracked, and member enrollment, end-of-term, and other National Service Trust forms must be submitted in compliance with existing requirements.

By getting things done, the Corporation means that programs are expected to meet specific and articulated local needs through direct and demonstrable service, and must include clear objectives related to the proposed service activities and results.

To strengthen communities, programs should engage a full range of local partners to build a self-sustaining commitment to service.

To develop members, programs should provide appropriate training, education, supervision, and support to carry out the service activities.

Program Strategies

The Corporation intends to support a variety of strategies under this initiative. The following are examples of strategies for part-time (including summer) and full-time programs. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional strategies and demonstrate to the Corporation why they should be supported.

1. School-based and community-based service programs, including youth corps, that provide tutoring and mentoring for younger children and opportunities to participate in service

projects after school, on weekends, and during school vacations.

2. College-based programs in which student AmeriCorps members, including Federal Work Study students, perform service (or serve as service-learning coordinators) in local schools or other community settings.

3. Summer programs in which AmeriCorps members organize service and other positive activities for children and youth.

4. Before and after-school child care programs led by AmeriCorps members and funded by local communities.

5. Full-time service programs run by faith-based organizations, youth corps, or other entities.

6. Fellowship programs in which individuals such as recent college or professional school graduates are placed in community service positions.

7. Programs sponsored by youth-serving organizations that create opportunities for older members or graduates of the organization to provide positive activities for younger members.

8. Service programs for college students that involve part-time service during the academic year and full-time service during the summer.

9. Programs initiated by mayors and other local officials to integrate locally funded AmeriCorps members into community-wide strategies to meet local needs.

Terms of Service

Programs must enroll members for full-time, part-time, or reduced part-time terms of service. A full-time term of service requires members to serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than a year. A part-time term requires members to serve at least 900 hours during a period of not more than two years. Reduced part-time terms are less than 900 hours, and are either: (1) Full-time—at least 35 hours per week—for a minimum of 8 weeks during the summer or another multi-month period; or (2) service of at least 450 hours during a single academic year (*i.e.*, September to May), while enrolled in college.

Under the AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, the Corporation will not accept proposals for part-time terms of more than two years nor for reduced part-time terms other than the two types explained above. Successful applicants will have up to one year following the start of the program to select and place members who will receive the approved education awards upon successful completion of their service.

Member Recruitment and Development

Programs must recruit and select members in a non-partisan, non-political, and non-discriminatory manner. Members must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens. Members must be at least 17 years old at the time of their enrollment, except for out-of-school sixteen year-olds who may participate in youth corps programs and programs for disadvantaged youth that address the need for housing and other community facilities in low-income areas.

Programs are encouraged to recruit members who possess leadership potential and a commitment to the goals of national service, regardless of the member's educational level, work experience, or economic background. Programs should engage diverse members, community volunteers and staff in service activities, and should actively seek to include members and staff from the communities in which projects are conducted, as well as individuals of different races and ethnicity, ages, genders, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and individuals with disabilities.

Programs must provide members with the training, skills, and knowledge necessary to perform the tasks required in their respective projects. In addition, programs must provide reasonable accommodation, including auxiliary aids and services, based on the individualized need of a member who is a qualified individual with a disability. Also, programs are encouraged to help members who have not completed their secondary education to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma.

In recruiting and placing members, programs must not displace any employee or position, or otherwise violate the non-displacement provisions of the Corporation's regulations, which are published at 45 CFR 2540.100(f).

Member Benefits

The Corporation does not require that a living allowance be paid, or health care and child care benefits be provided, to members under the AmeriCorps Education Awards Program. While the Corporation strongly encourages program sponsors to do so whenever possible, Corporation funds may not be used to provide any part of an allowance or such benefits. However, programs proposing full-time members must explain how these members will meet basic living expenses during their terms of service.

The maximum living allowance which may be paid to full-time AmeriCorps Members under this

program is \$16,680 per year, regardless of the source. Any living allowance for a part-time Member may not exceed a prorated share of a maximum of \$16,680 per year on a full-time basis. This maximum may be waived by the Corporation, upon request, for certain professional corps and similar programs.

Programs must also establish and maintain a procedure for receiving and resolving grievances from members and other interested individuals concerning the program.

Eligibility for and Use of Education Award

Members who successfully complete full-time, part-time, or reduced part-time terms of service are eligible to earn no more than two education awards. Full-time education awards are \$4,725, and part-time education awards are \$2,362.50. Amounts of reduced part-time education awards are prorated to the number of hours served.

The education award may be used only for specific educational purposes: (1) To repay a member's qualified student loans; or (2) toward the cost of a member's attendance at a qualified institution of higher education or approved School-to-Work program. The education award is not transferable to anyone other than the member. The award will be paid directly to the loan holder or the educational institution by the Corporation.

Prohibited Service

Prohibited activities may not be performed by participants in the course of their duties, at the request of program staff, or in a manner that would associate the activities with the national service program or the Corporation. However, members are free to engage in such activities on their own initiative, on their own time, and at their own expense. These activities include:

- (1) Any effort to influence legislation;
- (2) Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- (3) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- (4) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- (5) Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- (6) Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities which are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;

(7) Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious education or worship, constructing or operating facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;

(8) Providing a direct benefit to (a) a business organized for profit, (b) a labor union, (c) a partisan political organization, (d) a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or (e) an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (7) above, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;

(9) Voter registration drives by AmeriCorps members.

Eligible Applicants

State Commissions, national non-profit organizations proposing to operate in more than one state, and multi-state collaborations, must apply directly to the Corporation. Institutions of higher education and state education agencies may apply directly to the Corporation, or to State Commissions, as below.

Local non-profit organizations, state and local units of government (other than state education agencies), other state-wide programs, and other programs operating solely within the state must apply through respective State Commissions. Interested applicants should first contact their respective commissions.

Current Education Awards Program sponsors should contact the Corporation or their respective State Commissions for information about continuing their existing programs.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4), which engages in lobbying activities, is not eligible to apply, serve as a host site for member placements, or act in any type of supervisory role in the program.

This Notice does not apply to organizations currently operating, or interested in applying to become, AmeriCorps*VISTA cost-share projects. Such organizations should contact the respective state office of the Corporation for National Service.

Criteria for the Selection of Programs

The Corporation will employ the following criteria in the review of proposals under this initiative:

1. *Program Quality.* A proposal must establish clear and specific objectives to meet compelling community needs, demonstrate the applicant's capacity to implement meaningful service activities based on these needs, and select, train and manage AmeriCorps members to carry out these needs. The proposal should evidence strong community support and the capacity to substantially and positively impact the community being served, as well as to document that impact.

2. *Program Growth.* If the applicant currently sponsors an AmeriCorps project or other community service project, the proposal must evidence how the availability of education awards will add value to the program and increase the program's impact in the community.

3. *Preference for Youth Programs.* The Corporation will give preference to proposals addressing the needs of our Nation's children and youth, such as tutoring, mentoring, after-school and summer programs, and immunization, as well as programs to involve children and youth in performing service themselves.

4. *Summer Programs.* For the application deadline of April 23, 1998, the Corporation will give a preference to programs which will begin operations during June or July, 1998.

Selection Process

The Corporation will judge proposals with a process that includes review by outside experts, staff review and recommendations, and final approval by the Corporation Board.

The Corporation will enter into negotiations with potentially successful applicants in a manner that may require significant modifications to original proposals. Awards are contingent on successful completion of negotiations. The number of applications approved, the number of education awards provided to approved programs, and the duration of approved programs are subject to the availability of funds and education awards.

Dated: March 23, 1998.

Thomas L. Bryant,

Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel.

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