

- PRESS
- Press Releases

AARP Foundation To Receive \$3 Million in Federal Investment to Grow Student Reading Success

AARP Foundation Experience Corps supported by the Social Innovation Fund will continue to strengthen the successful program and investigate expansion of small group tutoring model

WASHINGTON, DC — AARP Foundation today announced that it will receive \$3 million in investments from the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Social Innovation Fund (SIF) to help grow Experience Corps, the evidence-based, award winning AARP Foundation literacy tutoring program that helps students in K-3 learn to read. The federal grant will be used to improve reading skills of children, enrich the lives of volunteer tutors, and strengthen schools in local communities.

AARP Foundation, together with the CNCS Social Innovation Fund, will use a competitive grant program to identify seven sites with high proportions of students who are struggling to read, representing 28 schools and 4,000 children. The program will work with an independent evaluator to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of small group tutoring (three to four children) and small group plus classroom-wide assistance strategies, with the goal of expanding the impact and reach of the program to even larger numbers of children and schools. By targeting schools in high need communities with large percentages of K-3 students who are reading below grade level and providing well-trained adults who are 50 and older as volunteer literacy tutors, K-3 students can accelerate their literacy achievement and read on grade level by the end of third grade.

"Literacy is directly linked to economic success and to self-reliance in creating opportunities and pathways out of poverty," said AARP Foundation President Lisa Marsh Ryerson. "This new class of Social Innovation Fund grants will enable AARP Foundation to deploy even more scalable, cost effective models grounded in research, bolstering the capacity of local programs to serve more children."

In the next several months AARP Foundation will select subgrantees from 19 eligible states to implement and rigorously evaluate the Experience Corps model. Selected subgrantees will work closely with AARP Foundation and the SIF to implement effective assistance plans that will increase levels of evidence and lead to replicable models and meaningful lessons for the broader social sector. Through matching funds by AARP Foundation and the subgrantees, we anticipate the SIF's \$3 million grant will result in nearly a \$9 million investment to communities around the country towards scaling reading success.

"Almost 70 percent of students in the U.S.—about 6.6 million children—are unable to read proficiently by fourth grade," noted Damian Thorman, Director of the Social Innovation Fund. "We are excited to work with AARP Foundation to build upon the preliminary success of the program's small group tutoring model, which can deliver the same impact to more children at a fraction of the cost of other tutoring models. With more rigorous evaluation and broader scaling we hope to offer cash-strapped nonprofits and schools a more sustainable model for helping greater numbers of children achieve success in school and beyond."

AARP Foundation Experience Corps is a program that matches volunteers age 50 and over with students in kindergarten through third grade to help them improve their reading skills. The program offers both 1:1 volunteer and small group tutoring assistance. An estimated 6.6 million children in K-3 have fallen behind in reading and The January 2014 KIDS COUNT® data snapshot released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, showed that 66 percent of all US fourth graders and 80 percent of US fourth graders from low-income families are not reading proficiently.

About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, strengthen communities, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. Learn more at www.aarpfoundation.org.

About the Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

CONTACT:

Charlotte Castillo, 202-434-2560, media@aarpp.org
