

The America Reads Program at Penn State



On-Site Supervisor Handbook

*For the things we have to learn before we can do them,
we learn by doing them.*

Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.

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Overview of the America Reads Program at Penn State

What is America Reads?

America Reads at Penn State is an initiative calling on college students to help local children learn to read well. A significant number of Penn State Federal Work-Study (FWS) positions have been dedicated to the America Reads effort. The program provides interested FWS students with part-time employment that (1) provides additional support to teachers, caregivers, parents, and librarians to ensure that all children learn to read well and independently, and (2) provides college students with a rich experiential service learning opportunity. Since its inception in 1997, the America Reads Program at Penn State has hired, trained and placed over 350 America Reads Reading Partners each year, thus providing additional literacy support to thousands of children throughout the Commonwealth.

Who can participate in America Reads?

Any Penn State student who is eligible for a Federal Work-Study award may participate as an America Reads Reading Partner and receive \$10.00 per hour (as of Fa09/Sp10 academic year). To be eligible, students must:

- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and have documented financial need.
- Be degree-seeking or have provisional status. Graduate students must be enrolled in their degree program by their department.
- Be enrolled at least half-time: six credits for undergraduates, five credits for graduates.
- Maintain Penn State's Satisfactory Academic Progress Standard.
- Hold United States citizenship or be classified as an eligible non-citizen.

Students participating in the summer program must be returning to Penn State in the upcoming fall or spring at least half-time and be degree-seeking or have provisional status.

The program is especially interested in individual students who are dedicated to community service and enthusiastic about helping young children learn the joys and rewards of reading and learning. Eligible individuals also must receive Act 33 (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance) and Act 34 (Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check) clearances. Participants working with elementary school-age children must also receive an FBI Fingerprint check.

Placement sites may include preschools and elementary schools, after-school and recreation programs, child-care facilities, housing authorities, libraries, and Head Start or family literacy programs. Participating sites should keep in mind that the intent of the program is to serve children most in need of literacy support. In addition, *America Reads Partners should never displace placement site staff.*

What is the job description for America Reads Reading Partners?

Quite simply, America Reads Partners read with and participate in site-planned educational activities for preschool (including infants and toddlers) through elementary-age children in a variety of community settings and at various times of the day and early evening. Partners are expected to act professionally and follow the policies and procedures of America Reads and their placement site in the community.

What training do the America Reads Reading Partners receive?

All America Reads Reading Partners receive (and are paid for) training in techniques for reading with children and listening to children read. This initial training in a workshop format includes:

- An explanation of responsibilities, policies, and procedures.
- An overview of children's literacy development and children's literature.
- Techniques for reading aloud with children and listening to them read.
- Ideas for developing children's vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Ideas for incorporating the arts (drama, music, art activities).
- Tips and resources for selecting high-quality books and materials.

On-going training and support is provided for Partners in workshops and through participation in an on-line discussion forum (listserv) established for the program. Topics include teaching techniques for various populations or ages of children, sharing of ideas and resources, and discussion and troubleshooting of problems or issues that arise on the job.

What are the responsibilities of the On-Site Supervisors in the community?

On-site Supervisors should provide the America Reads Reading Partners with an orientation to the site and discuss the Partners' job responsibilities. As stated previously, all Partners are trained to read with and listen to children read; however, many Partners may be able to assume additional responsibilities, such as one-on-one tutoring with specific children. Please discuss with the Reading Partner their perceived skills for assuming more responsibilities; some may need additional training. On-Site Supervisors should also sign and fax Partners' biweekly time sheets, sign a Letter of Agreement, and complete Section Two of the Placement Form (Partners will have copies of the forms).

Timesheets (NEW POLICIES)

Please keep a separate log in your classroom or site for participants to sign in and out each time they work. Before you sign participants' timesheets, please verify their hours in the log. Please fax the timesheets directly to the Office of Student Aid (814-863-0322) by the Monday after the pay period ends (see Pay Schedule for current year). We very much appreciate your cooperation in following these new policies to ensure program integrity.

Why get involved in America Reads?

Participating Partners have the opportunity to participate in activities outside of the college program and contribute valuable assistance to local communities. Community programs receive "an extra pair of hands" to help out with educational activities and provide personal literacy support to children. Most of all, countless children have the additional attention that may positively change the course of their lives forever.

Information for the America Reads Program at Penn State On-Site Supervisors

On-Site Supervisors will supervise the America Reads Reading Partners and work with the Penn State America Reads Campus Coordinator. They will:

- Acquaint Reading Partners with the site.
- Discuss policies, procedures, and responsibilities with Partners.
- Work with the Partner to complete and submit all paperwork to Penn State.
- Work with the Campus Coordinator to maintain a high-quality work experience.

1. Acquaint Reading Partners with the site.

- Where Partners will work.
- Where Partners will sign in and complete their time sheets.
- Personnel with whom the Partner will be working, such as child care providers, teachers, librarians, administrators, or other relevant personnel.
- On-site resources (libraries, art room, computers, etc.) that Partners may use.

2. Discuss America Reads and site-specific policies with Reading Partners and confirm their responsibilities and schedules.

- America Reads Reading Partners are expected to dress and behave professionally.
- Partners should call in advance if they are unable to arrive on time and call 24 hours in advance if they must miss a session (may be adapted to site-specific policies).
- Partners must give two-week notice and submit a letter of resignation if they stop working.
- Discuss any additional site-specific responsibilities or policies.
- Confirm work schedules.

3. Work with the Partner to complete all paperwork and submit to Penn State.

- Complete Section Two of the Placement Form and sign Letter of Agreement.
- Sign biweekly time sheets and **fax directly** to the Student Aid Office.
by the Monday following the last day of the pay period. Please see pay schedule attached.

4. Work in partnership with the Campus Coordinator to maintain a high-quality experience.

- Meet with Campus Coordinator to discuss the quality of services and program impact.
- Complete evaluation questionnaires at the end of the semesters.
- Contact the Campus Coordinator immediately if any problems arise.
Please use the fax back form attached to this packet or call your campus coordinator directly.
- Evaluate Partners once a year (will be mailed separately) and return to campus coordinator.

Federal Work-Study students who are selected for verification by the Office of Student Aid must stop working until verification is completed. If Partners are found to be ineligible, they must discontinue employment.

Information for the America Reads Program at Penn State Reading Partners

Federal Work-Study students participating in the America Reads program will fulfill all or part of their award by working as Reading Partners for preschool through elementary school-age children. Placement sites may include, but are not limited to, approved preschools and elementary schools, child care facilities, housing authorities, after-school and recreation programs, libraries, and Head Start or family literacy programs. Participating Partners will agree to:

1. Complete and submit all necessary forms and paperwork to the Campus Coordinator.

- + Act 33 and Act 34 Clearance Forms
- + Salary Deposit Request card
- + W-4 card (Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate)
- + I-9, Section 1 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form)
- + Placement Form, Section 1 (with Section 2 completed by on-site supervisor)
- + Letter of Agreement (also signed by on-site supervisor).

Submit all completed paperwork. Failure to complete all necessary paperwork will delay payment of wages.

2. Participate in (and be paid for) any scheduled meetings and mandatory training activities.

- An orientation meeting on-campus to learn about America Reads.
- An initial training workshop and any follow-up workshops.
- Any orientation programs held at the placement site.
- On-line discussion on a listserv established for the project.

3. Abide by the policies of the America Reads program and the placement site:

- Call the site in advance if you will be late; give 24 hours notice if you will be absent.
- You will be dismissed from the program after 2 absences without prior notice.
- Check local television or radio announcements for school cancellations during inclement weather.
- Respect the confidentiality of the site and the children.
- Dress appropriately according to the policies of the site.
- Provide two weeks notice and a letter of resignation if at any time you choose to stop working at the placement site.

4. Work with the on-site supervisor to fulfill your job responsibilities professionally:

- Arrive prepared for each session and apply the techniques and ideas learned in training and orientation.

- Modify your job responsibilities or techniques as requested.

Pay Schedule

- 3 **New Pay Schedules are issued for the academic year and summer session.**
- 3 **Failure to submit time sheets by the Monday following the last day of the pay period will delay payment of wages.**
- 3 **Submitting falsified time cards is considered fraud against the University and the federal government; legal action may be taken against the employee.**
- 3 **Federal Work-Study students who are selected for verification by the Office of Student Aid must stop working until verification is completed. If Partners are found to be ineligible, they must discontinue employment.**
- 3 **Students should monitor their earnings!! If you are close to earning your award amount please contact Jane Kone (jke1@psu.edu) to find out if you are eligible for additional funds. YOU WILL NOT BE PAID IF YOU CONTINUE WORKING WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS.**
- 3 **TIME SHEETS MUST BE FAXED BY SITE SUPERVISOR TO JANE KONE AT 814-863-0322 (UNIVERSITY PARK ONLY) OR FINANCIAL AID OFFICE AT OTHER CAMPUSES. At the end of each pay period, participants should submit time sheet to their supervisor to be verified, signed, and faxed by the Monday following the last day of the pay period in order to be processed for that pay period. STUDENTS SHOULD KEEP THE ORIGINAL FOR THEIR FILES.**

The America Reads Program at Penn State
On-Site Supervisor Fax-Back Form

FAX TRANSMITTAL

To: Priscilla _____ Carman, America Reads Coordinator at Penn State

Fax #: 814-863-6108

From: _____

Fax #: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

The America Reads Program at Penn State wants to ensure a high-quality program for all participants. If you are encountering a problem with a Partner, please take a few minutes to complete this sheet and fax it back to the number above. Thank you for time and participation in America Reads.

Partner's Name: _____ Site: _____

Does the Partner:

Yes No

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | arrive on time? |
| _____ | _____ | give advance notice if he/she is unable to attend? |
| _____ | _____ | act professionally and responsibly? |
| _____ | _____ | accept additional responsibility when asked? |
| _____ | _____ | interact with the children appropriately? |
| _____ | _____ | provide quality experiences? |

If you answered no to any of the above, please give a brief explanation of what is happening.

Do you want the coordinator to contact you personally? _____

~Thank You~