



iFoster Awarded \$4.3 Million for Public Health AmeriCorps

Funding will support 100 Foster Youth for 3 years to meet the public health needs of California's most vulnerable residents

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Serita Cox, Co-Founder & CEO

announced today that it has been awarded a [Public Health AmeriCorps grant](#) to train and support 100 Transition-Age Foster Youth (TAY) in California per year, with a three year renewable grant to assist California's most vulnerable residents who are patients of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and are either uninsured, on MediCal or under-insured. TAY will support patient services including scheduling medical appointments and assisting with resource navigation and government benefits enrollment.

[These 100 part-time positions](#) are in addition to an existing 266 AmeriCorps annual positions already being filled by

TAY in California, New York, Ohio, Nevada, Washington and Kentucky, who are providing the invaluable service of peer navigation - connecting other TAY, caregivers, workers, agencies and other non-profits to local and national resources to help youth in foster care and those aging out achieve self-sufficiency.

In 2019, iFoster's TAY AmeriCorps peer navigation program won the best new AmeriCorps program. This innovative program utilizes a peer-to-peer model to train and support current foster youth to serve the entire foster care community. iFoster's "for us / by us" model has connected over 30,000 TAY to local, regional and national resources, including over 500 curated resources in the iFoster portal. Each year, iFoster provided \$195 Million in resources, in addition to self-sufficiency support and jobs, all supported by peer navigators.

In 2021, in response to a request by Governor Newsom of California, iFoster pivoted its peer navigation program to focus on supporting equitable vaccine rollout efforts to stem the COVID-19 pandemic. iFoster created a virtual call center staffed by TAY peer navigators and partnered with 3 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to assist in scheduling vaccinations. In 9 months, iFoster's peer navigators fielded 39,450 calls, scheduled 12,032 vaccination

appointments, and reduced call wait time from over 2 hours to under 3 minutes, saving innumerable lives. It is this model that Public Health AmeriCorps will support to strengthen the health needs of the communities in which our TAY AmeriCorps members live.

“We are so pleased that AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recognized the effectiveness of foster youth in supporting our most vulnerable communities” said Serita Cox, iFoster’s Co-Founder & CEO. “PHA service is an important steppingstone for entry into careers in healthcare, a pathway many foster youth desire but find it difficult to enter without advanced degrees. This program will provide tangible work experience supporting FQHCs paired with youth earning free certifications in high-need healthcare jobs, such as Medical Assistants, Community Health Workers, and Peer Specialists. Our FQHC partners are guaranteeing first in-line interviews and permanent jobs”.



iFoster logo

In addition to iFoster’s State, National, and Public Health AmeriCorps programs, iFoster has been awarded a \$238,150 [American Rescue Plan planning grant](#) to build out a model to support other AmeriCorps programs providing service opportunities to foster youth nationwide.

Public Health AmeriCorps, a partnership between AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supports the recruitment, training, and development of a new generation of public health leaders. Backed by a five-year, \$400 million investment from the American Rescue Plan Act, Public Health AmeriCorps helps meet the public health needs of local communities and supports them while also creating pathways to public health-related careers.

About iFoster

iFoster is a 501c3 national non-profit with the largest and most inclusive online community of youth, caregivers, and organizations in foster care; with over 70,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Guam. iFoster’s mission is to ensure that every child growing up outside their biological home has the resources and opportunities they need to become successful.

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 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive

service roles; and empower millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov).

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