



# Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook

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**Topic:** Effective practices for FGP grants management.

**Summary:** This document provides ideas and suggestions for effective practices in operating and managing many aspects of FGP grants.

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## CHANGE LOG

This table lists all changes made in the most recent revision of this document. See [FGP- Previous Change Logs 2017-2022](#) for a full list of changes between 2017 and 2022. See Appendix D. 3 for changes made in 2023 and 2024.

### Edits made in (October 2024) | Version 2024.2

Change Number	Chapter and Page Number	Change
1	Chapter 8 (pg. 58)	Removed “strike benefits, training stipends, and other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household and added “non-legally mandated family support” regarding income calculation per FY 2025 Final Rule
2	Chapter 8 (pg. 59)	Removed “Sponsors must count the value of shelter, food, and clothing, if provided at no cost to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse” from income calculation per FY 2025 Final Rule
3	Chapter 10 (pg. 91)	Added language regarding administrative leave per FY 2025 Final Rule
4	Chapter 13	Updated links
5	Appendix A.11	Updated information provided in Evidence-Based Programs and Registries
6	Appendix A. 15	Updated document to reflect FY 25 Final Rule updates.
7	Appendix A. 16	Final Rule FAQ - Removed document as all information from 2019 has been incorporated into the guidance
8	Appendix A. 17	COVID -19 Resource Tool Kit removed.
9	Appendix C. 6.	Income Review Form updated to reflect FY 25 Final Rule updates.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Change Log</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>1 Introduction and Overview</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK .....	1
1.2 HANDBOOK DESIGN .....	1
1.3 AMERICORPS OVERVIEW .....	1
1.4 RESOURCES OF AMERICORPS .....	5
<b>2 Project Operations</b> .....	<b>14</b>
2.1 ELIGIBILITY, AWARDS, AND SPONSORSHIP .....	14
2.2 SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES .....	14
2.3 SPECIAL LIMITATIONS INCLUDING PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES .....	18
2.4 Effective Practices in Project Operations .....	21
<b>3 Performance Measurement and Evidence-Based Programming</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1 AMERICORPS PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE .....	22
3.2 EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAMMING .....	26
<b>4 Community Participation</b> .....	<b>28</b>
4.1 LOCAL OWNERSHIP .....	28
4.2 AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP ADVISORY COUNCIL .....	28
<b>5 Project Staff</b> .....	<b>31</b>
5.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS .....	31
5.2 STRUCTURE .....	31
5.3 PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR PROJECT STAFF .....	32
5.4 PROJECT STAFF ROLES .....	33
5.5 Effective Practices for Building Project Staff .....	36
<b>6 Volunteer Stations</b> .....	<b>38</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	38
6.2 VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	40
6.3 PREPARATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING .....	42
6.4 Effective Practices For Managing Volunteer Stations .....	44
<b>7 AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers Assignments</b> .....	<b>46</b>
7.1 CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS .....	46
7.2 Selection of Assignments .....	47
7.3 CHILDREN SERVED BY AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS IN THE FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM .....	49
7.4 TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS .....	50
7.5 Effective Practices in AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Assignments .....	50
<b>8 Volunteers in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP</b> .....	<b>52</b>
8.1 ELIGIBILITY TO BE ENROLLED .....	52
8.2 RECRUITMENT OF AMERICORPS SENIORS' VOLUNTEERS .....	53
8.3 SELECTION OF AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS .....	56
8.4 SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP .....	60

8.5	ENROLLMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE AMERICORP SENIORS FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM .....	61
8.6	ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF AMERICORPS SENIORS' VOLUNTEERS .....	62
8.7	SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.....	69
8.8	Effective Practices in Managing AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers.....	70
<b>9</b>	<b>AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Cost Reimbursements.....</b>	<b>72</b>
9.1	ADMINISTRATION OF COST REIMBURSEMENTS .....	72
9.2	VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS DETAILED .....	73
9.3	LEGAL REPRESENTATION .....	79
<b>10</b>	<b>Grants Management.....</b>	<b>80</b>
10.1	INTRODUCTION TO GRANTS MANAGEMENT .....	80
10.2	ROLE OF THE AMERICORPS OFFICE OF GRANT ADMINISTRATION .....	83
10.3	BUDGET MANAGEMENT.....	84
10.4	GRANT AMENDMENTS AND REBUDGETING.....	93
10.5	ACCESSING GRANT FUNDS AND MANAGING ADVANCES .....	94
10.6	SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND DENIAL OF REFUNDING.....	95
10.7	AUDIT REQUIREMENTS .....	96
10.8	CONCLUSION.....	96
10.9	Effective Practices for Securing Non-AmeriCorps Financial and In-Kind Support.....	97
<b>11</b>	<b>Reports and Recordkeeping .....</b>	<b>99</b>
11.1	REPORTS.....	99
11.2	RECORDKEEPING.....	101
<b>11.3</b>	<b>PROJECT COMPLIANCE MONITORING.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>11.4</b>	<b>MONITORING RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>110</b>
11.5	Effective Practices In Reports And Recordkeeping.....	111
<b>12</b>	<b>Community Partnerships and Collaboration .....</b>	<b>113</b>
12.1	COORDINATION WITH OTHER AMERICORPS PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS .....	113
12.2	PUBLIC AWARENESS.....	114
12.3	Effective Practices in Community Relations .....	115
<b>13</b>	<b>AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index .....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Description and List of Appendices .....</b>	<b>123</b>
	Section A: All Programs.....	123
	Section C: AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs.....	124
	Section D: AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Programs Only.....	124

## **PREFACE**

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*The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) [As of September 29, 2020 will be known as AmeriCorps] is an independent, federal grant-making government agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For 25 years, AmeriCorps—through its programs: AmeriCorps Seniors, AmeriCorps, and Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF)—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action. AmeriCorps provides grants to national and local nonprofits, schools, government agencies, faith-based and other community organizations and other groups committed to strengthening their communities through volunteering.*

*This AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program (AmeriCorps Seniors FGP) Operations Handbook (Handbook) provides ideas and suggestions for effective practices in operating and managing many aspects of local AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects. It is a technical assistance document and not a compliance guide. Many of the suggestions refer to specific sections of the federal regulations that govern AmeriCorps FGP, but the Handbook does not address all issues covered in the regulations. Sponsors and project directors are required to follow the FGP Federal Regulations, published in [Title 45, Chapter XXV, Part 2552](#), of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Sponsors and project directors with concerns or questions with respect to compliance should first consult the federal regulations, the terms and conditions of the grant award, and, if necessary, contact the appropriate portfolio manager.*

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**Upon request, this material will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.**

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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## 1.1 PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook has been developed for the use of sponsors of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP (Foster Grandparent Program) projects, including executive directors or their designees, project directors and other project staff, advisory council members, and others involved in managing local projects.

For further guidance on fiscal, programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters, sponsors and project directors should consult the AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations](#), the [Terms and Conditions](#) of the sponsor's Notice of Grant Award (NGA), or their AmeriCorps portfolio manager.

**If there is a conflict between the contents of this Handbook and the federal regulations or the Terms and Conditions of the NGA, the regulations governing the grant, or the Terms and Conditions of the NGA are the controlling authority.**

## 1.2 HANDBOOK DESIGN

The Handbook is organized into a series of chapters that are designed to provide sponsors and project staff with ideas and suggestions for operating their AmeriCorps Seniors projects. At the end of many of the chapters, a series of *Effective Practices* is presented that may help a sponsor implement a program locally. It is expected that sponsors and project directors will use these ideas to stimulate their own creative thinking and adapt the suggestions to meet their own local needs.

Further, many parts of the Handbook refer to specific sections of the regulations that govern AmeriCorps Seniors FGP in the [FGP Program Regulations](#), but the Handbook in no way replaces these regulations. Sponsors who want to clarify official policies should refer to the [Terms and Conditions](#) listed in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) and any official policy guidance issued by AmeriCorps.

This handbook will be updated periodically.

## 1.3 AMERICORPS OVERVIEW

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established under the [National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993](#) to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. It merged the work and staffs of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service.

At its inception, AmeriCorps was directed to manage three main programs:

- [Senior Corps](#), which incorporated the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion and RSVP programs.

- [AmeriCorps](#), which incorporated the longstanding [VISTA](#) program, the new [National Civilian Community Corps](#) program, and the full-time demonstration program that had been established under the [National and Community Service Act of 1990](#)
- Learn and Serve America, formerly known as Serve America. In 2011, this program was eliminated from the CNCS budget and portfolio of programs.

As of September 29, 2020, CNCS and Senior Corps have been rebranded, AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors, respectively.

Today AmeriCorps serves more than 5 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds help meet local needs through a wide array of service opportunities. These include projects in six priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families through AmeriCorps's core programs: AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors.

AmeriCorps is part of our nation's history of commitment to building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility. For more information on the history of AmeriCorps see the [National Service Timeline](#). See [Appendix A.7](#) for common acronyms.

### **1.3.1 AMERICORPS TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

As CNCS, now AmeriCorps, approached its 25th anniversary, it implemented the Transformation and Sustainability Plan. The plan is to incorporate improvements to better support the field and position national service for greater impact and growth for the next 25 years and beyond. Developed after months of review and incorporating ideas from staff, grantees, sponsors, previous Administrations, the Inspector General and GAO, and other stakeholders, the plan expanded access, improve customer service, strengthen community impact, build long-term sustainability, and position national service for future growth.

**Specific steps the agency has and will continue to take in the Transformation and Sustainability Plan are:**

- Ensuring its core business functions are accountable and effective
- Make it easier for organizations and individuals to participate in programs
- Align its workforce and workplaces to better serve its customers, meet evolving needs, and ensure efficient use of public funds
- Strengthen its impact in communities by prioritizing evidence-based models

The plan makes AmeriCorps more efficient, effective, and accountable to better serve our customers, meet the needs of the Nation, and be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. For more information and updates, visit our [Strategic Plan](#) webpage.

### **1.3.2 AMERICORPS SENIORS**

Each year AmeriCorps Seniors taps the skills, talents, and experience of persons ages 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: [RSVP](#), the [Foster Grandparent Program\(FGP\)](#), and the [Senior Companion Program \(SCP\)](#). AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers recruit and manage other volunteers, participate in environmental projects, mentor and tutor children, deliver meals to the homebound and respond to natural disasters, among many other activities. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparents Program serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to young people with special or exceptional



needs. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Senior Companions Program help adults maintain independence in their homes.

Through grants and other resources—including the energy and efforts of citizens aged 55 and over—AmeriCorps Seniors helps meet the needs and challenges of America’s communities.

➤ *AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP*

Since 1971, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation for people 55 and over, has matched older adults who are willing to help with local organizations on the front lines of meeting community needs. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP projects link the skills of the volunteers with the identified needs of the community. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in RSVP do not receive any monetary incentive or stipend, but the project may reimburse volunteers for certain out-of-pocket costs associated with their service activities. In addition, volunteers receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurance as well as community recognition.

➤ *AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program*

Since 1965, the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program has provided one-on-one mentoring, nurturing, and support to children with special or exceptional needs, or who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. AmeriCorps Senior volunteers in FGP serve from 5 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. Volunteers must be age 55 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurance; assistance with the cost of transportation; recognition; and, as feasible, meals during their assignments.

➤ *AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program*

Since 1974, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Senior Companion Programs have made a difference by providing assistance and friendship to adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. Their assistance helps these adults retain their dignity and remain independent in their homes rather than having to move to more costly institutional care. AmeriCorps Seniors serve from 5 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. They must be age 55 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, excess automobile liability insurance coverage; assistance with the cost of transportation; recognition; and, as feasible, meals during their assignments.

### **1.3.3 AmeriCorps Seniors FGP: Purpose and Goals**

➤ *Purpose*

Under the authority of the [Domestic Volunteer Service Act](#), AmeriCorps Seniors provides grants to qualified agencies and organizations to engage persons 55 and older in volunteer service by serving children and youth in their communities.

➤ *Goals*

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP are role models, mentors, and friends to children with special and exceptional needs, or who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social or emotional development. Achievement of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP’s purpose is facilitated by the coordination of the resources of AmeriCorps, the sponsor, and the community to fulfill the following goals of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP:

- 1) Develop opportunities for older people willing to share their experience, abilities, and skills for the betterment of their community and themselves to serve children and youth in their communities.
- 2) Ensure that volunteer assignments are consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteers and the needs of the community served.
- 3) Ensure that volunteers are provided needed orientation, in-service instruction, individual support and supervision, and recognition for their volunteer service.
- 4) Provide reasonable opportunity for community and volunteer involvement and support in development, operation, and appraisal of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project.
- 5) Develop local support to supplement available federal sources and ensure that program expenditures are incurred at the lowest possible cost consistent with the effective operation of the project, as required by AmeriCorps Seniors' legislation.
- 6) Cooperate with agencies and organizations involved in the fields of aging and volunteerism.
- 7) Develop a sound, locally controlled senior volunteer program with continuing community support.

#### **1.3.4 HISTORY OF AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP**

The 1960 White House Conference on Aging highlighted the need for all older people to stay active which could be done through service to their country. The conference led to the passage of the Older Americans Act of 1965 under which several pilot demonstration programs were initiated, including the Foster Grandparent Program, financed by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and administered by the Administration on Aging (AoA).

In August of 1965, under AoA, the program was launched nationally with 21 projects located throughout the United States whose goals were to engage people over age 60 who have some income limitation, with opportunities to provide one-to-one love and attention to children in institutional group settings while providing the older person with a sense of contribution, purpose, and a small stipend to their poverty-level income, enabling them to participate without cost to themselves.

The program quickly demonstrated that these older Americans were not only willing to share their time but had a deep desire to help others and could make a lasting, positive impact on their community. Over the years, the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program evolved to include supporting children in public schools and other settings.

In 1971 President Nixon created the ACTION agency to provide coordination of all government sponsored volunteer programs and in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established, merging the work and staffs of two agencies: ACTION; and the Commission on National and Community Service. The CNCS mission was to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation.

On April 21, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the [Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act](#), which reauthorized and expanded national service programs administered by the CNCS. It also lowered the age eligibility from 60 to 55 and increased income eligibility to 200% of the poverty level. The Act also authorized volunteers to expand service to children "having special or

exceptional needs or with conditions or circumstances identified as limiting their academic, social, or economic development.”

On January 31, 2019, updated program regulations became effective for all three Senior Corps programs. The regulations updated and eliminated many regulations that had become outdated and burdensome within the context of current programming. For the Senior Companion Program, most notably, the regulations changed the volunteer service hour requirement to at least five (5) hours weekly or 260 hours annually and reduced the minimum requirement of ongoing in-service training annually from 40 hours to 24 hours.

### **1.3.5 AMERICORPS**

Since its founding in 1994, AmeriCorps engages Americans in intensive service at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country tackling pressing problems and mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve through three programs: [AmeriCorps State and National](#), [AmeriCorps VISTA](#), and [AmeriCorps NCCC](#) (National Civilian Community Corps). AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, and build the capacity of nonprofit groups to become self-sustaining, among many other activities. In exchange for a term of service, members earn a living allowance and a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that can be used to pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans.

## **1.4 RESOURCES OF AMERICORPS**

### **1.4.1 Office of the Inspector General (OIG)**

The OIG is an independent and objective office established to help improve AmeriCorps’s programs and operations, including AmeriCorps Seniors. It has the responsibility of keeping the AmeriCorps’s CEO and the Congress informed about any problems and deficiencies relating to AmeriCorps programs and operations. The OIG carries out this role by conducting and supervising audits and investigations that promote economy and efficiency, as well as prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in AmeriCorps’s programs. The OIG also coordinates AmeriCorps’s relationship on these types of matters with other organizations, including Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

**When to Contact the OIG:** The OIG should be promptly contacted whenever information is discovered that indicates that there has been waste, fraud, abuse, or any violation of criminal law at a program or at a sub-recipient.

#### **Contacting the OIG**

The OIG will accept confidential referrals of fraud, waste, and abuse in AmeriCorps Seniors or other AmeriCorps programs.

Written notifications should be submitted to:

Inspector General  
AmeriCorps  
250 E Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20525

By Phone: (202) 606-9390 or the  
OIG toll-free Hotline: (800) 452-8210

Via email: [hotline@cncsoig.gov](mailto:hotline@cncsoig.gov)

## **1.4.2 Office of Government Relations and Strategic Engagement**

### **1.4.2.1 Major Functions**

The Office of Government Relations and Strategic Engagement (OGRSE) coordinates communications, branding, and outreach and engagement efforts for AmeriCorps and its programs. The staff works closely with other offices and departments to enhance and support efforts to reach out to external audiences. It serves as a resource for AmeriCorps Seniors grantees to help them to amplify their own stories.

OGRSE maintains a “[one-stop shop](#)” for grantee communication needs, which, among other items includes:

- A Communications Toolkit, including templates
- The AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors Branding Guide
- An event registration link for you to easily share any and all events you host
- A link to submit photos
- Links to current Fact Sheets

If you are planning an event or announcement, need sample materials, or need assistance or advice, please contact OEA at [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov).

### **1.4.2.2 AmeriCorps Websites**

OGRSE, with support from other departments, maintains the [AmeriCorps website](#). [AmeriCorps.gov](#) has pages dedicated to each of our programs and initiatives. For ease of discovery, you can reach these pages using the domain names [Americorps.gov/seniors](#) and [AmeriCorps.gov](#). The pages are designed to help customers, including program grantees and other stakeholders, get the information they need as easily and quickly as possible so they can focus their energies on serving community needs.

These sites recognize the power of the national service network through stories from service participants, news from the field, program spotlights and best practices. Other features include:

- Search function across all sites
- Phone directory of AmeriCorps staff
- Stories of service
- Latest news & blogs from the field
- Photo library
- Best practices
- Program spotlights
- Interactive guides for finding the “Right Program” (for organizations and individuals)
- Service calendar
- Forms library
- FAQs
- Connections to AmeriCorps Social Media sites (Facebook/X/YouTube)

#### **Ordering AmeriCorps Publications**

AmeriCorps Seniors projects can obtain OGRSE materials and publications through [online ordering](#).

[Communication resources](#) and media kit materials are available on the national service website.

Program logos can be found on the [AmeriCorps logo webpage](#)

*Finding what you need on the AmeriCorps websites:*

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Here are some of the most frequently asked questions from organizations working with or seeking to work with AmeriCorps Seniors, with links to their answers:

- Where can I find out about AmeriCorps funding opportunities?

[Funding Opportunities Webpage](#)

- I'm having trouble using the electronic grants system. Where do I go for help?

[The eGrants Helpdesk / National Service Hotline](#)

- Where can I find training and technical assistance information?

[Manage your grant  
Grantee & Sponsors  
Online Courses](#)

- I am a current grantee. Where can I find AmeriCorps Seniors grant application instructions and supporting materials?

[AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparents Program grantee page](#)

- Where can I find my Notice of Grant Award (NGA)?

You can access your NGA in [eGrants](#), the electronic grants management system. Once you have logged in to eGrants, select "View Awarded" in the View My Grants/Applications menu. Navigate to the award you are looking for, and in "Select a Report," choose "Notice of Grant Award" and click "go." The NGA will open in a pop-up window.

- Where can I find the Terms and Conditions for my grant award?

[Terms and Conditions section of the FGP grantee webpage](#)

- Where can I find information about required National Service Criminal History Checks?

[National Service Criminal History Checks](#)

- Where can I find information about days of service?

[Events](#)

- Where can I find information about the changes in the OMB Circulars?

[Uniform Guidance](#)

- I work for a faith-based organization. Are we eligible to apply for AmeriCorps grants?

[Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#)

- I'm interested in promoting your programs to my organization's constituents. Where can I order brochures or other promotional materials?

[AmeriCorps Promotional Items  
Grantee Resources  
Communication Resources  
Branding Guidelines for Grantees](#)

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview*

- How do I find AmeriCorps programs in my own community?

[National Service in Your State](#)

- I'm a grantee and am looking for AmeriCorps photos to use in our brochures. Where can I find them?

[AmeriCorps Flickr gallery](#)

[Communication Resources](#)

- Where can I find resources for working with Veterans and Military Families?

[Veterans and Military Families](#)

### **1.4.2.3 Partnerships and Program Support**

OGRSE develops and manages [partnerships](#) and alliances that strengthen the impact and broaden the reach of national service. It is authorized to solicit and accept private donations which support AmeriCorps programs and initiatives. Additionally, OGRSE takes the lead in producing many events connected to the agency's signature projects such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, AmeriCorps Seniors Week, the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, National Service Recognition Day, and AmeriCorps Week.

#### *National and Community Service Initiatives*

- AmeriCorps encourages participation in community-wide service activities. OGRSE works with AmeriCorps programs to support both our signature projects such as MLK Day of Service, as well as other national service initiatives like the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, and AmeriCorps Seniors Week, and AmeriCorps Week. These annual national service activities provide opportunities to reach out to both traditional service partners and grantees and organizations with which projects might like to form new partnerships.
- [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#) is a day of service that reflects Dr. King's life and teaching--bringing people together around a common bond of service to others. Responding to a 1994 Congressional charge, the Corporation, now AmeriCorps, engages Americans across the country to celebrate the King Holiday in a way that reflects his proposition that "everybody can be great because everybody can serve." National service grantees lead communities in making it a day on, not a day off and answering Dr. King's important question, "What are you doing for others?" In keeping with Dr. King's teachings, AmeriCorps promotes service that leads to better economic justice for all. AmeriCorps provides grants to support service projects that reflect Dr. King's life and teaching.
- AmeriCorps Seniors Week is an annual recognition week designed to salute volunteers from AmeriCorps Seniors programs Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion and RSVP, recognize community partners, and communicate the impact of and on the lives of those who serve and who are served. AmeriCorps Seniors Week is the ideal time to promote the continuing contributions of older adults to communities. \*AmeriCorps Seniors Week will not be held in 2021, instead, AmeriCorps Seniors will highlight AmeriCorps Seniors projects during May, Older Americans Month.
- [September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance](#) is the culmination of efforts originally launched in 2002 by the 9/11 nonprofit MyGoodDeed with wide support by the

## *AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview*

9/11 community and leading national service organizations. This effort first established the inspiring tradition of engaging in charitable service on 9/11 as an annual and forward-looking tribute to the 9/11 victims, survivors, and those who rose up in service in response to the attacks.

- [National Service Recognition Day](#) is an annual recognition where mayors, county, and tribal officials hold public events to highlight the value of national service to their cities and counties. This initiative is held in collaboration with the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties and Cities of Service.
- [AmeriCorps Week](#) is an annual recognition week designed to bring more Americans into service, thank AmeriCorps members and alumni for their powerful impact, and thank the community partners that help to make service possible. AmeriCorps Week is an ideal time to promote the depth and breadth of the national service family. In 2016, AmeriCorps will enroll its one millionth member.

### *Training and Technical Assistance*

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The [Grantee and Sponsors page](#) at is AmeriCorps’s “one-stop shopping” site for tools, training, and information about volunteering and national service. The Grantee and Sponsors page provides quick and easy access to training and technical assistance resources for national service programs.

The following is a summary of available features on the Grantee and Sponsors page:

- [AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program grantee page](#)

This landing page provides access to the most up-to-date guidance and resources needed to effectively manage your program. This includes: Program updates; grantee resources related to Terms and Conditions, governing authorities and guidance, program handbook, establishing performance measures, submitting progress reports, manage budget and conduct drawdowns, submit a Federal Financial Report, respond to a monitoring request, close out award, and submit continuation and renewal; Manage your grant with links to eGrants instructions, pre-award requirements, Terms and Conditions, Financial Report Requirements, and Training and Technical Assistance.

- [National Service Criminal History Checks](#)

Under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act (SAA), all grantees must conduct National Service Criminal History Checks. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP and SCP are required to conduct checks on participants and project employees. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVPs are required to conduct checks on project employees. In addition, grantees are required to maintain specific documentation verifying successful completion and adjudication of criminal history checks.

This landing page provides an exhaustive list of requirements, guidance and resources aimed at all AmeriCorps programs including FGP, SCP and RSVP.

[Financial Management Resources and Financial Reporting Requirements](#) Organizations need to handle funds wisely. This may include developing written policies and procedures, internal controls,

and budget controls. AmeriCorps grantees also need to be familiar with documenting in-kind donations, time and activity reporting, generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), AmeriCorps regulations, and OMB circulars. Some of our most relevant resources related to this topic can be found on this page.

- [Performance Measurement](#)

AmeriCorps' Performance Measurement framework provides a common focal point for AmeriCorps's work across all programs and initiatives. AmeriCorps has a focused set of agency-wide measures derived from the [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#) and each AmeriCorps Seniors program contributes to them.. This page provides access to common core curricula as well as to each program's specific measures, requirements, and associated resources.

- [Evaluation Resources](#)

Evaluation is a powerful tool for demonstrating impact and improving program operations. AmeriCorps has a number of resources to help grantees evaluate their work on the [Evaluation Resources](#) web page. In addition, AmeriCorps has a focused set of agency-wide measures derived from the [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#) and each AmeriCorps Seniors program contributes to them. See [Chapter 3](#) for more information about the performance measures.

- [Litmos](#)

Litmos is AmeriCorps' online learning management system. It contains dozens of interactive online courses for AmeriCorps Seniors grantees. It also contains recordings of all live webinars offered by AmeriCorps Seniors. Course topics include financial management, performance measurement, evidence-based programming, approaches to tutoring and mentoring, independent living, responding to the opioid epidemic and much more. To sign up for an account:

1. Visit this page in any web browser:  
<https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/>
2. Enter the required information.
3. In the Code field, enter: ACS-FGP if you represent an AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program, ACS-RSVP if you represent an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program or ACS-SCP if you represent an AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companions Program.
4. Click "Register."
5. **If you are affiliated with two different AmeriCorps Seniors programs** (for example, if your sponsor has both an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP and a Senior Companion Program), enter only one code at first. After you hit "Register" the first time, visit <https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/> again, fill out the form in full, and enter the code for the second program only. Use the same email address both times to avoid duplicating your account.
6. You're in! Consider taking a minute to view the [AmeriCorps Seniors Litmos Orientation](#) before moving on. You can come back at any time to explore more and take any courses that interest you.



- **New Project Curricula**

AmeriCorps Seniors has created two in-depth curricula to aid Foster Grandparent programs that are new to AmeriCorps Seniors, both of which can be found in Litmos. They offer an interactive introduction to everything you need to know to begin working with AmeriCorps Seniors, and include activities to help you get to know your grant, AmeriCorps and the resources available to you in more depth. They were originally created for organizations that received their first AmeriCorps Seniors grant, but much of the content is relevant to any individual who has joined an AmeriCorps Seniors program, even if it has been in existence for some time.

You can take the curricula as a whole, or just use individual modules to brush up on specific topics. Be sure to watch the introductory videos to learn more about how you can make the most of them:

- [The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP New Project Curriculum](#) introduces you to the basic requirements of running an AmeriCorps Seniors grant, helps you understand how those requirements and strategies apply to your specific grant, and points you to resources and tools you can use to make your job easier.
- [The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Financial Management Curriculum](#) introduces you to the basic *financial and accounting requirements and strategies* for running a AmeriCorps Seniors grant, helps you understand how those requirements and strategies apply to your specific grant, and points you to resources and tools you can use to make financial management easier.

Email [servicesresources@cns.gov](mailto:servicesresources@cns.gov) for Litmos technical support.

### *AmeriCorps Research and Evaluation*

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The Office of Research and Evaluation (R&E) advances the mission of AmeriCorps's programs, including the AmeriCorps Seniors programs, by building knowledge about the effectiveness of national service, social innovation, civic engagement, and volunteering as solutions to community needs. R&E also works to improve the decision-making of AmeriCorps Seniors, its grantees, and the field through the use of scientific research methods. This is accomplished by supporting AmeriCorps grantees, offices, and programs in the measurement of performance and results, embedding evidence throughout the development and implementation of their work, and shaping key policy decisions using credible data.

Research efforts supported by R&E include:

- The [Volunteering and Civic Engagement](#) report is issued by AmeriCorps and the National Conference on Citizenship and shows that service to others continues to be a priority for millions of Americans.
- [Evidence Exchange](#): a digital repository of research, evaluation reports, and data focusing on national service, social innovation, civic engagement, and volunteering. The purpose of this repository is to provide our grantees, our partners and, most importantly, communities across America easy access to this information. AmeriCorps Seniors specific reports and reports on issues relevant to AmeriCorps Seniors are available.

## *AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview*

- [Evaluation Resources](#): Evaluation is the use of social science research methods to assess a program's design, implementation, and effectiveness. It is a tool that helps programs continuously improve their work and demonstrate what they are accomplishing in communities. This page contains a number of resources to assist your program as it moves through each stage of the evaluation process.

### *The Electronic Grants System*

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The [electronic grants system](#) (eGrants) is an online system designed to automate the entire grants and project management process from application to closeout. It serves as the official system of record and maintains the Notice of Grant Awards which include the terms and conditions of the grant award.

#### *Sponsors use the electronic grants system to:*

- ✓ Submit and track grant applications including certifications and assurances, amendments, continuations and renewals
- ✓ Submit Federal Financial Reports, Project Progress Reports and other required reports

#### *Portfolio Managers use the electronic grants system to:*

- ✓ Review applications and reports,
- ✓ Award and manage grants efficiently and effectively.

The electronic grants system Help Desk can be reached at:

**Phone:** 1-800-942-2677

**Online:** [National Service Hotline](#).

### **1.4.3 The Federal Register**

AmeriCorps Seniors programs are governed by law and administrative rules or regulations. Making and amending government regulations is controlled by the White House's Office of Management and Budget. Notices of proposed regulations must be published in the Federal Register for public comment.

Published every Federal working day, the [Federal Register](#) is the official gazette of the United States Government. It provides legal notice of administrative rules and notices and Presidential documents in a comprehensive, uniform manner. Visit the *Federal Register* for free online access to its publications.

### *Code of Federal Regulations*

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The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad subject areas of federal regulation. Each volume of the CFR annual edition is updated once each calendar year. The 50 subject matter titles contain one or more individual volumes, which are updated once each calendar year, on a staggered basis.

Each title is divided into chapters, which usually bear the name of the issuing agency. Each chapter is further subdivided into parts that cover specific regulatory areas. Large parts may be subdivided into subparts. All parts are organized in sections, and most citations in the CFR are provided at the section level (such as [45 CFR 2552.21](#)). A list of agencies and where they appear in the CFR may be found in Appendix C of the [U.S. Government Manual](#). AmeriCorps is found in Title 45, Chapters XII and XXV. The [regulations](#) governing FGP are in Chapter XXV, Part 2552, which is typically cited as “45 CFR 2552.”

The online CFR or “eCFR” provides the public with enhanced access to Government information and is a convenient way to access the latest version of the program regulations incorporating all amendments. In the eCFR, amended sections are identified with the date of their publication and a reference to the volume of the Federal Register where they were published.

**Electronic Code of Federal Regulations -  
the eCFR**

The eCFR is a current, daily updated version of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The eCFR is a convenient way to access the latest version of the regulations incorporating all amendments. Regulations cited in this Handbook are linked to the eCFR.

As of September 29, 2020, CNCS and Senior Corps are doing business as AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors, respectfully. The eCFR will continue to use the legal names CNCS and Senior Corps.

## **2 PROJECT OPERATIONS**

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### **2.1 ELIGIBILITY, AWARDS, AND SPONSORSHIP**

#### **2.1.1 Sponsor Eligibility**

AmeriCorps awards federal AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grants to public agencies, Indian Tribes, and secular and faith-based private non-profit organizations in the United States, that have authority to accept and the capacity to administer AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects.

#### **2.1.2 Solicitation of Proposals**

When federal AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grants are available AmeriCorps conducts a grant competition. A Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) is issued when funding for a grant competition has been appropriated by Congress or a Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) is issued when funding for a grant competition is anticipated but not yet available). The NOFA or NOFO may also be referred to as the “*Notice*” in application related instructions. Any eligible agency or organization may apply for an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grant. Notices are posted at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and at the [Funding Opportunities](#) on AmeriCorps website [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.americorps.gov). Notices will be shared broadly through national and local networks.

#### **2.1.3 Submission of a Grant Application**

Grant applications are submitted in the AmeriCorps electronic grants system, eGrants. Applications are submitted following the *Notice* instructions and using the forms included on the [Funding Opportunities](#) webpage. The application must be submitted by a representative of the sponsor who is authorized by its governing body to certify that all data in the application are true and correct, the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant, and the applicant will comply with the Assurances submitted with the application, if the assistance is awarded. (See [Grant Terms & Conditions on the FGP webpage](#) to review the Assurances and Certifications.)

#### **2.1.4 “Self-Sponsored” Projects**

In some situations, project staff, advisory councils, boards, or other interested persons, have incorporated as an independent non-profit organization and successfully competed to become a sponsor. These so-called “self-sponsored” projects must meet all the administrative and programmatic requirements associated with sponsorship addressed in the program regulations. AmeriCorps neither encourages nor discourages self-sponsorship but recommends that groups considering this option fully explore the advantages and disadvantages applicable to their situation and consult with other organizations who have taken this step. Contact your portfolio manager for further information.

### **2.2 SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **2.2.1 Regulations Requirements**

The sponsor is legally responsible for fulfilling all project management responsibilities necessary to accomplish the purposes of the program and may not delegate or contract these

responsibilities to another entity. Sponsor responsibilities are listed in [45 CFR 2552 Subpart B](#) of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP regulations. A few key responsibilities are listed here:

- 1) Focus AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program resources on critical problems that affect children with special or exceptional needs, or children in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development within the project service area and in compliance with AmeriCorps performance measure requirements.
- 2) Ensure that National Service Criminal History Checks are conducted according to AmeriCorps's requirements and the sponsor's written policy for every AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and covered staff (see [National Criminal Checks Resources](#) webpage and Chapter 8 for further details).
- 3) Assess, in collaboration with other community organizations or through utilization of an existing assessment, the needs of the client population in the community and develop strategies to respond to those needs using AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer resources.
- 4) Develop and manage one or more volunteer stations to provide placement opportunities that appeal to persons aged 55 and over by:
  - a) Ensuring that a volunteer station is a public agency, Indian Tribe, or non-profit private organization, whether secular or faith-based, or an eligible proprietary health care agency, that has the capacity to serve as a volunteer station. Proprietary health care organizations are for-profit health care organizations that serves one or more vulnerable populations (45 CFR 2552.12). AmeriCorps defines vulnerable populations in its grant terms and conditions to include children aged 17 or younger, persons aged 60 and older, and/or individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are defined as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. Refer to Chapter 6 for more information about volunteers at health care agencies and volunteer stations.
  - b) Ensuring the placement of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the sponsor and each volunteer station. (See *Preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding* in Chapter 6, for more information.)
  - c) Complying with and ensuring that all volunteer stations comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations, including non-discrimination based on disability and providing reasonable accommodation where appropriate. (See [Appendix A.2, Primer on Civil Rights Compliance](#).)
  - d) Developing service opportunities to support locally identified needs of eligible children in a way that considers the skills and experiences of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and meets the performance outputs and outcomes approved in the grant application.
- 5) Make special efforts to recruit and place into AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer service individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency, Veterans and military family members, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach populations

and groups in the community which are underrepresented in the project. The sponsor should stress the recruitment and enrollment of persons not already volunteering.

- 6) Provide AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with:
  - a) Assignments that show direct and demonstrable benefits to the children, the community served, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, and the volunteer station;
  - b) Required cost reimbursements specified in [45 CFR 2552.46](#), including insurance, transportation, and recognition of their service, and the elective cost reimbursements of meals, uniforms, and physical exams.
  - c) A minimum of 20 hours of pre-service orientation and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training (45 CFR 2552.23(f)).
- 7) Secure community participation in local project operation by establishing an advisory council. (See Chapter 4, *Community Participation*, for additional information.)
- 8) Provide levels of staffing and resources appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project and carry out its project management responsibilities.
  - a) Employ a full-time project director (except as otherwise negotiated with AmeriCorps) to accomplish program objectives and manage the functions and activities delegated to project staff for AmeriCorps Seniors program(s) within its control (45 CFR 2552.25(c)). (See Chapter 5, *Project Staff*, for more information). To negotiate a less than full-time project director, please consult with your portfolio manager.
  - b) Establish recordkeeping and reporting systems in compliance with AmeriCorps requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations, facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports, and cooperate with AmeriCorps evaluation and data collection efforts.
  - c) Conduct criminal history checks on all grant-funded staff, in accordance with the requirements in [45 CFR 2540.200–207](#).
  - d) Consider all project staff as sponsor employees subject to its personnel policies and procedures (45 CFR 2552.25(d)).
  - e) Compensate project staff at a level that is comparable with similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area, as is practicable (45 CFR 2552.25(e)).
  - f) Establish risk management policies and procedures covering project and Foster Grandparent activities. This includes but is not limited to policies and procedures on criminal history checks of staff and volunteers, and the provision of appropriate insurance coverage for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, vehicles, and other properties used in the project.
  - g) Establish written service policies for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers that include but are not limited to annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, termination, appeal procedures, meal and transportation reimbursements and document that volunteers have received program policies.

- h) Conduct an annual appraisal of volunteers' performance and annual review of their income eligibility.
  - i) Ensure that appropriate liability insurance is maintained for owned, non-owned, or hired vehicles used in the project.
  - j) Assume full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully.
- 9) Ensure that the official sponsor and project information in AmeriCorps electronic grants system (eGrants) is accurate, including the legal names of the sponsor organization and the project; the names of the sponsor's authorized representative and the project director; and their respective post office addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.
- 10) Encourage the most efficient and effective use of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers by coordinating project services and activities with related national, state and local programs, including other AmeriCorps programs.

### **2.2.2 Fund Raising Limitations – Uniform Guidance**

The sponsor assumes full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully. Certain government-wide requirements apply to fund raising under AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grants.

AmeriCorps Seniors sponsors must follow all applicable OMB Cost Principles, as stated in the [Terms and Conditions](#) of your grant award.

All FGP grant awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, OMB Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards located at [2 CFR Part 200](#) and AmeriCorps's implementing regulation at [2 CFR Part 2205](#) (hereinafter, the Uniform Guidance). Award recipients must read, understand, and implement these requirements.

See [Appendix A.8 Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants](#) for more information.

### **2.2.3 Relinquishment**

If an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP sponsor determines they are no longer able to administer the project, they should contact their portfolio manager as soon as possible. The portfolio manager will work with the sponsor for an orderly relinquishment and close-out of the grant.

To begin the relinquishment process the sponsor will be asked to send a letter to their AmeriCorps portfolio manager formally giving notice of their decision to relinquish the grant and the effective date of the relinquishment. The AmeriCorps portfolio manager will forward the letter to the AmeriCorps Seniors and senior portfolio manager. The portfolio manager will provide the sponsor with template letters to send to volunteers, volunteer stations, and advisory council members. The portfolio manager will set up a meeting with the sponsor to review the status of the grant funds for close-out. The project will be responsible to complete a final project progress report and financial reports.

#### **2.2.4 Subsequent Requirements**

The sponsor must also abide by any subsequent laws, Executive Orders, or relevant regulatory directives, including special conditions that may be prescribed for the project. The sponsor may establish additional policies not covered by, and not contradictory to, AmeriCorps policies.

### **2.3 SPECIAL LIMITATIONS INCLUDING PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

The following are special limitations, including prohibited activities, to which AmeriCorps Seniors FGP sponsors and projects are subject. Project sponsors must have written policies in place to ensure compliance with the list below. In the event of a question as to the application of the following limitations, contact the appropriate AmeriCorps portfolio manager.

#### **2.3.1 Political Activities ([45 CFR 2552.121\(a\)](#)) and [45 CFR 1226](#))**

- 1) No part of any grant may be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity to influence the outcome of any election to public office, or any voter registration activity.
- 2) No project may be conducted in a manner involving the use of funds; the provision of services, space, or facilities; or the employment or assignment of personnel in a manner that identifies the project with:
  - a) Any partisan or nonpartisan political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election; or
  - b) Any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election; or
  - c) Any voter registration activity except that voter registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information may be made available to the public at the premises of the sponsor. But in making registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information available, employees of the sponsor and volunteers may not express preferences or seek to influence decisions concerning any candidate, political party, election issue, or voting decision.
- 3) No volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP or employee of a sponsor or volunteer station may take any action, when serving in such capacity, with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP with such activity.
- 4) The sponsor may not use grant funds for any activity that influences the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition. In other words, there is a prohibition against using FGP grant funds for lobbying activities.
- 5) Prohibitions on Electoral and Lobbying Activities are fully set forth in [45 CFR 1226](#). See AmeriCorps's [Frequently Asked Questions on Lobbying](#) and [Partisan Political Activity](#) for more information.

#### **2.3.2 Restrictions on State or Local Government Employees ([5 U.S.C. 1501, 1502 & 1503](#))**

If the sponsor is a state or local government agency with a grant from AmeriCorps, certain restrictions contained in Chapter 15 of Title 5 of the United States Code are applicable to persons who are principally employed in activities associated with the project. The restrictions are not



applicable to employees of educational or research institutions. Employees subject to these restrictions may not:

- 1) Use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office; or
- 2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes; or
- 3) Be a candidate for elective office, except in a nonpartisan election. (“Nonpartisan election” means an election in which none of the candidates is to be nominated or elected as representing a political party any of whose candidates for Presidential elector received votes in the last preceding election at which Presidential electors were selected.)

### **2.3.3 Religious Activities ([45 CFR 2552.121\(g\)](#))**

- 1) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and project staff funded by AmeriCorps may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization as part of their duties.
- 2) A sponsor or volunteer station may retain its independence and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs, provided that it does not use AmeriCorps funds to support any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded. If an organization conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded under FGP.

### **2.3.4 Non-Discrimination ([45 CFR 2552.121\(f\)](#))**

For purposes of this regulation, any program, project, or activity to which AmeriCorps supported volunteers are assigned is deemed to be receiving federal financial assistance. (See [Appendix A.2, Primer on Civil Rights Compliance](#), for more information.)

- 1) A sponsor or sponsor employee may not discriminate against an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, or with respect to any activity or program, on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.
- 2) Sponsors are encouraged to take affirmative action to overcome the effects of prior discrimination. Even in the absence of prior discrimination, a sponsor may take affirmative action to overcome conditions which resulted in limited participation.

### **2.3.5 Labor and Anti-Labor Activity ([45 CFR 2552.121\(d\)](#))**

No grant funds may be directly or indirectly used to finance labor or anti-labor organization or related activity.

### **2.3.6 Non-Displacement of Employed Workers and Non-Impairment of Contracts for Service ([45 CFR 2552.121\(b\)](#) and [45 CFR 1216](#))**

A volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers or impair existing contracts for

service. See [45 CFR 1216.1.1 – 1216.1.4 Non Displacement of Employed Workers and Non-Impairment of Contracts for Service](#) for the AmeriCorps regulations on this subject. These regulations list certain exceptions.

### **2.3.7 Prohibition on Fee-for-Service ([45 CFR 2552.121\(c\)](#))**

Under no circumstances may a volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends. No person, organization, or agency may request or receive any compensation for services of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

As set forth in Section 404(c) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA), there is a general prohibition against grantees and volunteer stations requesting or receiving any compensation for the AmeriCorps Seniors services of volunteers. This prohibition is sometimes referred to as the “fee-for-service” prohibition. Section 404(c) provides the following:

#### ***(c) Compensation of supervising agencies or organizations***

*No agency or organization to which volunteers are assigned hereunder, or which operates or supervises any volunteer program hereunder, shall request or receive any compensation from such volunteers or from beneficiaries for services of volunteers supervised by such agency or organization.*

In some cases, determining whether a payment requested or received by a grantee or volunteer station is permissible in light of the prohibition is relatively straightforward. In other cases, however, making determinations as to whether the arrangement is permissible in light of the prohibition requires a more in-depth review, including an assessment by AmeriCorps. More Guidance on Prohibition of Fee-for-Service Activities, including examples can be found in [Appendix A.12](#). If you have questions about fee-for-service contact your AmeriCorps portfolio manager.

### **2.3.8 Nepotism ([45 CFR 2552.121\(h\)](#))**

Persons selected for project staff positions may not be related by blood or marriage to other project staff, sponsor staff or officers, or members of the sponsor Board of Directors, unless there is written concurrence from the Advisory Council and with notification to AmeriCorps.

### **2.3.9 Volunteer Status ([45 CFR 2552.45](#))**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are not employees of the sponsor, the volunteer station, AmeriCorps, or the Federal Government.

### **2.3.10 Fair Labor Standards ([45 CFR 2552.121\(e\)](#))**

A sponsor that employs laborers and mechanics for construction, alteration, or repair of facilities must pay wages at prevailing rates as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the [Davis-Bacon Act](#), as amended, 40 U.S.C. § 276a.

### **2.3.11 Prohibitions on Abortion Service**

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps Seniors program or AmeriCorps Seniors, staff and volunteers may not engage in providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.

## **2.4 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN PROJECT OPERATIONS**

### **Ensuring that the Sponsoring Organization Takes a Leadership Role**

Effective practices include:

- A. The sponsor values the project as an integral part of its organizational vision and operations by:
  - 1. Communicating the importance of the project to its Board, staff, and volunteers;
  - 2. Ensuring that the project has adequate administrative and fiscal support;
  - 3. Playing an active role in promoting the project and its contributions to the community;
  - 4. Meeting regularly with media, political leaders, funders, civic groups, and others to promote awareness of and support for the project; and
  - 5. Maintaining communication with AmeriCorps portfolio manager and attending state and regional training events where feasible. In the event that a sponsor representative (staff, advisory council member, or program volunteer) is unable to attend an AmeriCorps sponsored training event, please submit an alternative training event to your Portfolio Manager for approval.
- B. The sponsor provides strong project leadership by:
  - 1. Employing a project director who demonstrates strong leadership skills in working with project and sponsor staff, volunteers, volunteer stations, and the project's Advisory Council;
  - 2. Establishing and, with the project director, maintaining strong working relationships with related community agencies, organizations, and leaders;
  - 3. Ensuring that sponsor's leadership and the project director establish and maintain a good working relationship based on clear communication and mutual support;
  - 4. Designating a member of the staff who has clearly defined responsibilities for project oversight and support; and
  - 5. Developing and maintaining clear lines of reporting between project staff and the sponsor representative.
- C. The sponsor has written policies and procedures in place to ensure oversight of the project and compliance with federal rules and regulations that address topics like:
  - 1. National Service Criminal History Checks and special limitations including prohibited activities;
  - 2. Establishing and updating Memoranda of Understanding with sponsor stations;
  - 3. Fiscal management and internal controls related to management of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project;
  - 4. Documentation of data management systems related to tracking project outcomes, demographics, and other performance indicators in order to verify and validate data used to meet reporting requirements.

## **3 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING**

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### **3.1 AMERICORPS PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE**

Older volunteers have a tremendous amount of knowledge, skill, and experience to contribute to our communities through the enriching investment of service. Through the application of performance measurement, we balance the need to implement service projects that are fulfilling to volunteers and beneficial to communities served with the demand to demonstrate results and improve project design.

Honoring the intent and vision of the 2009 Serve America Act, AmeriCorps has established a set of national performance measures. These measures allow all programs to use common terms, definitions, and approaches to measurement and make it possible to tell the story of national service with confidence.

[AmeriCorps's national performance measures](#) reflect six programming priorities or focus areas which include: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families, and Capacity Building. AmeriCorps Seniors allows projects to select measures from each of these areas following a performance measurement framework that is detailed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). This framework is subject to change. Specific measures are identified in the NOFO and Appendix B on the [AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grantees](#) webpage.

#### **3.1.1 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT BASICS**

Performance measurement is the ongoing, systematic process of tracking your program's outputs and outcomes. *Outputs* refer to the amount of service provided. They measure the completion of activities and document the fact that individuals received services, products were created, or programs were developed. *Outcomes* reflect the changes or benefits that occur. Outcomes can reflect changes in individuals, organizations, communities, or the environment. This may include changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, or condition. For additional information and training, complete the six-module [National Performance Measurement Core Curriculum](#) series.

#### *Why measure performance?*

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One reason is accountability. Performance measurement satisfies the need of funders and stakeholders (including AmeriCorps participants, board members, community members, staff and clients, and taxpayers) to see that the program or project is getting results. Performance measurement helps you communicate achievements in a way that funders and stakeholders will find meaningful and compelling.

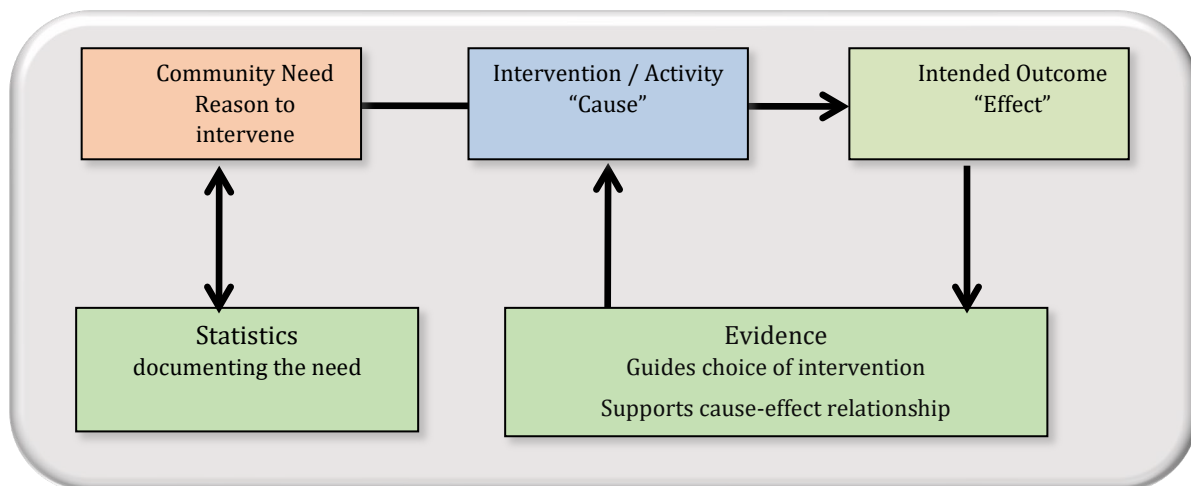
Another reason to measure performance is to determine if the change you thought would happen with your intervention is actually occurring. Performance measurement is a systematic way to collect reliable information about the intervention's implementation and progress toward outcomes.

You can also use performance measurement data to spot and correct problems. Are you reaching the population you intended? Do some people require more or less intensive service to show a positive outcome? Even when an intervention is implemented exactly as planned, performance measurement can help you find ways to strengthen the intervention to make it more effective.

Performance measurement is a way to get feedback, so you know if your intervention is making the expected difference, and helps you decide how to make the most effective use of your limited resources. Performance measurement also allows you the opportunity to promote the excellence of your program.

### **3.1.2 THEORY OF CHANGE**

A Theory of Change is used in performance measurement to describe why a change is expected to happen given a particular set of circumstances. It helps you map out why a specific series of service activities or intervention will lead to expected outcomes.



A theory of change has three main elements:

- Community need
- Intended outcome
- Specific intervention or set of service activities

As you develop a theory of change for an issue that your program will address, you identify where you are now, as well as the change for which you are programming. You will choose certain activities and define the amount of service required to bring about the desired outcomes.

A strong theory of change presents statistics to document the community need and includes evidence that supports the cause-and-effect relationship between the intervention and outcome.

### **3.1.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURE WORK PLANS**

Performance measure work plans are used by AmeriCorps Seniors grantees to explain the design of their programs and the goals they expect to reach.

All existing AmeriCorps Seniors grantees as well as applicants for new funding identify performance measures in work plans in their grant applications. For the specific requirements, see the instructions for the grant application on the [FGP grantee webpage](#).

The elements of the work plan are:

*Community Need.* This is the priority community issue or problem that the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' service activities will address. The need should be measurable and include current and reliable sources to establish the compelling nature of the need. The need should be described in enough detail to convey its importance, the consequences of it going unmet, and why AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can be an effective resource to meet it. It should be described in a way that is clear to people unfamiliar with your community.

*Service Activity.* The service activity is the task that the volunteers will perform. The service activity is selected from a menu of pre-defined options.

*Service Activity Description.* The service activity description should indicate how much service is necessary to achieve the output and outcome selected. It should include who the beneficiaries are, and what the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will be doing with them. It should outline how often AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will provide the service, for how long, and where the service will take place.

*Anticipated Unduplicated (VSYS):* For stipended programs, the "anticipated unduplicated" field is the proposed number of Volunteer Service Years (VSYS) that will be dedicated to this performance measure. One VSYS equals 1,044 hours of service and can be achieved by multiple individuals. For example, a volunteer who serves 5 hours per week (261 hours a year) plus a volunteer who serves 15 hours per week (783 hours per year) would equal 1 VSYS total (1,044 hours per year).

## **Targets**

### **Output and Outcome targets:**

These targets are the numbers that you anticipate achieving in the third year of the performance period. For example, if you think your volunteers will serve 100 seniors in the first year, 150 seniors in the second year, and 200 seniors in the third year of the performance period as the work plan is implemented over the course of the performance of the 3-year grant, you would enter 200 as your target.

### **Anticipated Unduplicated Volunteer (VSYS) targets:**

The anticipated unduplicated field for stipended projects captures VSYSs. A single volunteer in a stipended program may serve towards multiple work plans. For example, a volunteer may tutor some children and provide social-emotional support to different children. Their hours spent tutoring would count towards one work plan, and their hours spent on social-emotional support would count towards the other work plan. The same hours served may not be counted towards more than one work plan.

To calculate the VSYSs, divide the number of hours served towards the performance measure by 1,044. Round to the nearest whole number.

### **Anticipated Total Volunteer targets:**

The total number of volunteers engaged in the activities, if you were to assign all of them according to each activity, will be entered in this section. For example, if the same volunteer does two different types of activities such as social-emotional support and tutoring, you would include that volunteer in the Anticipated Volunteer field in the social-emotional support work plan and the tutoring work plan.

*Anticipated Volunteer:* This is the number of individuals who will provide services towards this performance measure.

*Output.* These are the immediate results or products of the services provided by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Accomplishments tell what was done in some quantified fashion. They include the number of persons helped, the amount of something that was created, the number of times an activity was performed, and the extent to which a program or service was expanded.

*Output Instrument.* This is the tool that will be used for data collection. The instrument is selected from a menu of pre-defined options.

*Output Instrument Description.* The instrument description provides an outline of the data collection plan and schedule. It should include a brief description of who will collect the data, from whom, and when it will be collected.

*Outcome.* These are the measurable changes in the community, persons served, or agency that occurred as a result of the service activity. Impacts or outcomes are measures of effectiveness of the program in the community or with those served, or they are measures of cost-effectiveness which show how much money or other resources the service activity saved in the community.

*Outcome Instrument.* This is the tool that will be used for data collection. The Instrument is selected from a menu of pre-defined options.

*Outcome Instrument Description.* The instrument description provides an outline of the data collection plan and schedule. It should include a brief description of who will collect the data, from whom, and when it will be collected.

#### **3.1.4 IMPLEMENTING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT WORK PLANS**

To implement performance measure work plans, see the instructions for completing work plans and identifying performance measures found in the AmeriCorps Seniors Grant Application. Additional guidance, measurement instruments, and other resources are available on the [FGP grantees](#) webpage. For questions, contact your portfolio manager.

Projects are held accountable for their actual performance against specified targets. With respect to each performance measure, grantees will be expected to:

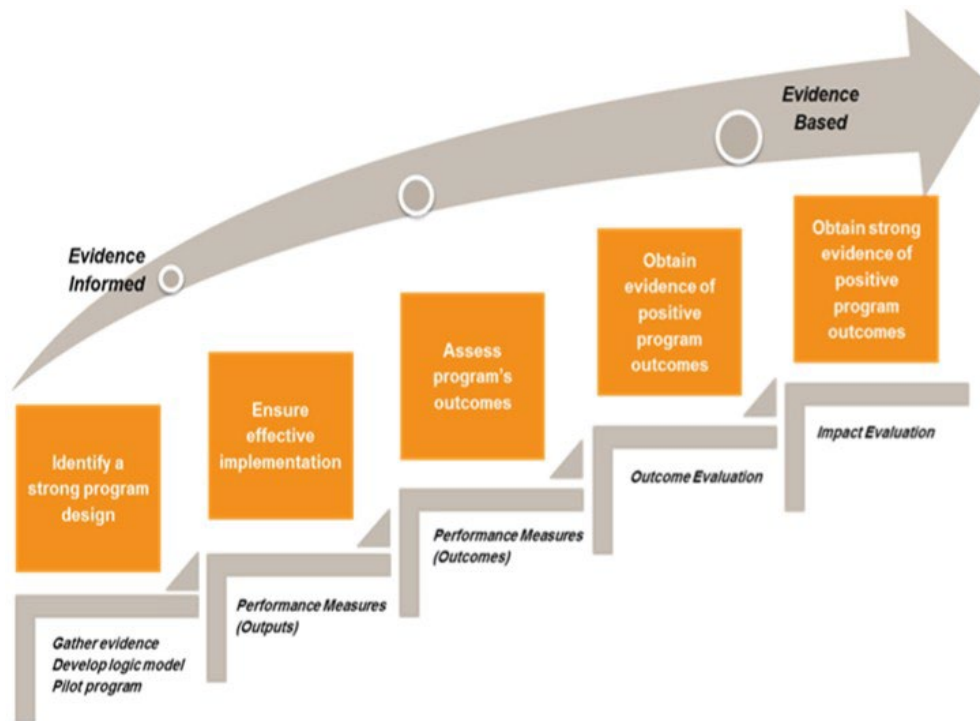
- 1) Report on progress achieved;
- 2) Make the underlying documentation of performance available for review; and
- 3) Report on any operational changes and project improvements that resulted from information learned from the performance data.

Experience has shown that clear expectations with stations greatly enhance grantees' ability to effectively collect the data that allows for performance measurement. Such expectation is often documented in the Memorandum of Understanding or a data sharing agreement. A sample data sharing agreement is available in [Appendix A.13](#).

## 3.2 EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAMMING

Federal agencies, educational institutions, non-profits, and others often discuss the evidence behind program models in an attempt to understand what works and what does not. AmeriCorps Seniors is joining this national conversation.

Our programs have long used evidence to support their understanding of whether the service provided is having its intended effect. Now, we seek a deeper understanding of the evidence that supports our program models recognizing that programs may have supporting evidence that exists along a continuum.



### Evidence Continuum

#### 3.2.1 Key Terms

*Evidence-informed program.* A program design based on academic research or program evaluations is properly referred to as *evidence informed*. For example, a program developer might use research on the development of reading skills or the physical activities that increase bone density to develop a program.

*Evidence-based program.* The term “evidence-based program,” in general, refers to a set of activities and practices supported by a theory of change tested through rigorous program evaluations. These evaluations have demonstrated a causal relationship between program activities and specified outcomes, typically through one or more quasi-experimental or experimental field tests.

*Evidence-based program model.* A program model is a set of activities and practices supported by an explicit theory of change, resulting in specified outcomes. The specificity of essential elements in an evidence-based program model varies. However, evidence-based program models should address:



*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 3: Performance Measurement and Evidence-Based Programming*

- Amount of contact or service over a period of time (“dosage”)
- Characteristics of service recipients/communities served
- Methods of quality assurance
- Training of professional staff and supporting volunteers
- Standard procedures or curriculum
- Monitoring for *fidelity to program model*

*Replication.* Replicating an evidence-based program with *fidelity to the model* means that essential elements of the service activity has been implemented as described in the evidence-based program model and that adaptations are relatively minor.

For an explanation of how evidence based programming aligns with AmeriCorps efforts to ensure volunteers are engaged in work that has an impact on volunteers and their communities (including evidence-informed programming, performance measurement, and evaluation) see the [Evidence Exchange](#) and [FGP grantees](#) web pages.

### **3.2.2 Evidence-Based Programs and Registries**

AmeriCorps Seniors maintains a list of evidence-based programs and registries of both programs and research that may be relevant to its grantees in [Appendix A.11](#) to this handbook. This list is not necessarily comprehensive, and AmeriCorps Seniors will add additional programs and registries to this list as it becomes aware of them. If you would like to inform AmeriCorps Seniors of a potential addition to this list, email your portfolio manager.

## **4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

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### **4.1 LOCAL OWNERSHIP**

AmeriCorps FGP projects are community-based projects supported by federal funds for the dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high-quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers. In order to accomplish this, AmeriCorps Seniors programs have a responsibility to partner with organizations in the local community to:

- Build public awareness of and support for the program within the community;
- Recruit and place volunteers to enhance the capacity of organizations and institutions within the community;
- Work to integrate senior service into the activities of other service programs within the community;
- Work toward common goals in local communities, complementing and reinforcing each other's contributions through activities related to Days of Service, Strategic Initiatives, and other local service initiatives.

Community participation is generated by individuals, groups, organizations and other national service programs. A project can garner community support through volunteer stations, local funding sources, civic and service clubs, the media, friends and family of volunteers and those with whom they work, other programs of the sponsor, schools, private non-profits, businesses, community leaders, and others who value the activities, accomplishments and impacts of the project and the volunteers.

### **4.2 AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP ADVISORY COUNCIL**

#### **4.2.1 Program Requirement**

The scope and extent of participation by the many entities that make up a community will vary considerably from project to project. However, all projects can benefit from the involvement of a focused and sustained core group that provides perspective and active assistance from the service area. The sponsor determines how this core group participation shall be secured, consistent with the provisions of the program regulations([45 CFR 2552.24](#)). For the sake of easy reference, this core group is referred to as the advisory council. If the sponsor has a board that meets the purposes and requirements of all applicable AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program regulations (see 45 CFR Part 2552), it is permissible for some or all of the members of that board to also serve on the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council, as long as the advisory council is established and operated as entity separate from the sponsor; in other words, the advisory council must not be a part of the sponsor.

#### **4.2.2 Role**

Subject to the requirements in the applicable AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program regulations regarding the purpose and composition of this group, sponsors have flexibility concerning the specific structure and operation of this body. Depending on local community circumstances, the advisory council may be used by the sponsor to:

- Assist in assessing community needs;
- Assist in fund raising and resource development;
- Support the development of a service ethic in the community;
- Advise on volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition strategies;
- Suggest candidates for project staff positions;
- Link the project with other community service resources, including faith-based organizations;
- Advise on data collection and performance measurement;
- Assess project accomplishments and impact, including progress toward meeting performance measures;
- Assess satisfaction of volunteers and volunteer stations;
- Suggest ways the project can gain increased visibility and recognition in the community; and/or
- Advise on how trends in the community are affecting seniors.

AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects should keep thorough records of advisory council participation and structure such as the group's bylaws, current membership, and meeting minutes. Additional resources on Appendix A. 23 [Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils](#) can be found on the Knowledge Network.

#### **4.2.3 Membership**

Remember, an effective advisory council can expand the capacity of the sponsor and project staff. The advisory council must have a membership that includes people ([45 CFR 2552.24](#)):

- Knowledgeable of human and social needs of the community;
- Competent in the field of community service and volunteerism;
- Capable of helping the sponsor meet its administrative and program responsibilities including project assessment, fund-raising, publicity, and data reporting requirements;
- With interest in and knowledge of the capability of older adults;
- Who are of a diverse composition that reflects the demographics of the service area.
- Projects may want to refer to the US Department of Education's resource on [Building an Effective Advisory Council](#).

#### **4.2.4 Allowability of Costs**

As advisory councils are required by AmeriCorps Seniors regulations (45 CFR 2552.24(a)), grantees may expend reasonable amounts to support their activities. Such costs should still meet

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 4: Community Participation*

all other aspects of OMB cost principles, including being allowable, allocable, reasonable and necessary, as well as being documented sufficiently.

If you have a question about a specific type of expense, consult your portfolio manager to ensure that it meets these conditions.

## **5 PROJECT STAFF**

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### **5.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The project director must be an employee of the sponsor subject to the sponsor's personnel policies and practices. Sponsors may also directly employ project staff to support the project director, as well as consultants and contractors, provided that the sponsor does not delegate or sub-contract responsibility for fulfilling project management requirements. ([45 CFR 2552.22](#) and [45 CFR 2552.25](#))

Hiring of project personnel must comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, the Serve America Act, other Federal civil rights statutes and regulations, applicable state laws and local ordinances, and sponsor personnel and employment practices.

### **5.2 STRUCTURE**

The program regulations require that the sponsor employ a project director and other staff appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project. See [45 CFR 2552.25 \(b\) - \(e\)](#) for provisions regarding staffing levels and compensation for staff. The size of each individual project and budget levels will often dictate the number of project staff needed to effectively manage the project.

In structuring the staffing pattern, the following should be considered:

- a) Size of the service area
- b) Number, kind, and location of volunteer stations
- c) Number of volunteers
- d) Geographic distribution of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP assignments
- e) Types of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer placements and assignments (more project staff time is sometimes needed to administer and monitor AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers within home assignments)
- f) Specific needs of the children served
- g) Availability of funds
- h) Meeting Performance Measure requirements which involves collecting, storing, and aggregating data
- i) The potential for programs to continue to improve how they build and use evidence, including understanding local community needs, analyzing and acting on performance measurement data, preparing for possible external evaluations, or implementing evidence-based programming
- j) Availability of supplemental state or federally subsidized full- or part-time staff, and AmeriCorps Seniors FGP or non-AmeriCorps Seniors staff.

- AmeriCorps Seniors grantees can collaborate with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act, to jointly engage older adults in several ways, such as:
  - i. AmeriCorps Seniors and SCSEP grantees can work together to enable their participants to support joint community service projects;
  - ii. SCSEP participants nearing their 4-year limit on participation may be interested in participating in AmeriCorps Seniors;
  - iii. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, who meet age and income qualifications and seeking paid employment, may be interested in participating in SCSEP.
  - iv. More information about SCSEP grantees see the [Senior Community Service Employment Program website](#).
- Volunteer staff, consistent with the nature and purpose of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer programs, are persons with management experience and others with experience in office operations, who may be deployed to strengthen and expand the operations of AmeriCorps FGP projects.
- Non-AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can be budgeted as in-kind contributions for necessary project operational functions.

### 5.3 PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR PROJECT STAFF

The applicable AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program regulations require that project staff be covered by sponsor personnel policies ([45 CFR 2552.25\(d\)](#)). At a minimum, policies should address salaries and fringe benefits, probationary periods of service, national service criminal history checks, suspensions, resignations, hours of employment, vacations, sick leave, holidays, terminations, and grievance procedures.

- 1) The sponsor shall compensate project staff at a level that is comparable with similar positions in the sponsor organization and/or the project service area, as is practicable ([45 CFR 2552.25\(e\)](#)).
- 2) The sponsor should prepare a job description for each project staff position to promote the recruitment of qualified applicants and to specify each position's authority and responsibility. It is recommended that an annual performance evaluation be completed for all staff.
- 3) It is critical that AmeriCorps Seniors sponsors make **National Service Criminal History Checks** (NSCHC) a priority when hiring project staff. **Grantees that do not comply with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance.** Please read this section and the [NSCHC webpage](#) carefully to be sure your policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance with the requirement. Grantees should contact their AmeriCorps portfolio manager for NSCHC questions or requirement clarification.

#### 5.3.1 NSCHC Overview

Under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act of 2009, all AmeriCorps Seniors grantees must conduct NSCHC on **grant-funded staff** and national service participants that receive a salary, national service education award, living allowance, or stipend under AmeriCorps Seniors grants. Individuals in these positions must undergo the NSCHC

process before the start date. This means the required checks must be completed, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made prior to charging any staff time to an AmeriCorps Seniors grant. Therefore, it is critical to comply with the NSCHC requirements **on time, every time**.

The Code of Federal Regulations outlines the Nationals Service Criminal History Check rules and regulations in full at [45 CFR 2540.200–207](#). Additional information on NSCHC, including the **required annual NSCHC e-course**, an FAQ document, and links to technical assistance resources can be found on the [Criminal History Check Resources webpage](#).

AmeriCorps has published a new NSCHC Regulation 45 CFR 2450.200 - .207 (**effective May 1, 2021**). Please see the [NSCHC Rule Summary](#) document for information on the new rule.

These requirements are statutory minimums, and individual grantees can, and often should, supplement these with additional safeguards for vulnerable populations, such as additional screening mechanisms, additional eligibility criteria, a code of conduct, training for staff and volunteers, and a clear system for reporting and handling reports of any harm or potential harm to vulnerable populations resulting from their program. Contact your portfolio manager for more resources on ways to protect your program’s vulnerable beneficiaries.

### **5.3.2 NSCHC Enforcement**

***Grantees that do not comply with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance.*** More information on cost disallowance can be found in the [NSCHC Manual, Monitoring and Enforcement section](#). As a result, it is in an organization’s interest to develop a system for monitoring its own compliance.

### **5.3.3 NSCHC Resources**

[See AmeriCorps NSCHC webpage](#) for links to the regulations, requirements, and training materials. Note that resources posted on this webpage may be updated at any time, so be sure to consult the webpage directly for the most current resources.

Some of the key resources available on the [NSCHC webpage](#) are:

- Links to the required annual NSCHC eCourse training & NSCHC Learning Path in Litmos. NSCHC Manual
- Recommendations for Effective Policies and Procedures
- NSCHC Steps Table
- NSCHC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Using AmeriCorps-Approved Vendors, Truescreen, and Fieldprint Manual (Litmos)
- Using NSOPW and State Repositories Manual

## **5.4 PROJECT STAFF ROLES**

### **5.4.1 Project Director**

1) The sponsor assigns responsibility for the project's daily management to the project director. A project director functions as a working project manager, actively involved with community organizations, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and volunteer stations. The sponsor should establish procedures for internal review and approval of project director performance in accordance with its standard policies and procedures. The project director may serve as the

representative of the sponsor in signing and approving official project documentation, including project reports, memoranda of understanding, and letters of agreement for in-home assignments.

- 2) The project director serves full-time, except as negotiated otherwise with AmeriCorps. A full-time project director may not serve concurrently in another capacity, paid or unpaid, during established working hours. A sponsor may negotiate in writing the employment of a part-time project director with AmeriCorps when it can be demonstrated that such an arrangement will not adversely affect the size, scope, and quality of project operations. The project director may participate in activities to coordinate program resources with those of related local agencies, boards, or organizations ([45 CFR 2552.25\(c\)](#)). To negotiate a less than full-time project director, please consult with your portfolio manager.
- 3) In the case it becomes necessary to dismiss a project director for cause, sponsors should follow their established personnel policies and procedures. **When such action is apparent, (as well as in any other situation where the project director resigns) the sponsor should immediately notify the portfolio manager, stating the reason(s) for the action.** When necessary, provisions for temporarily continuing operations without a project director should also be submitted to the portfolio manager in writing.
- 4) Under direction of the sponsor's executive director /CEO or designee, the project director's duties typically include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Assessing volunteer needs of the community and planning and developing all phases of the project operation.
  - b) Selecting, training, supervising, and evaluating project staff.
  - c) Recruiting, orienting, placing, and arranging for assignment of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
  - d) Providing coordinated pre-service orientation, in-service instruction, and overall supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with volunteer station professional staff.
  - e) Incorporating performance measurement principles and practices in program development, volunteer placement, and project assessment.
  - f) Maintaining appropriate fiscal and program records and preparing reports.
  - g) Developing and maintaining close coordination with volunteer stations.
  - h) Enhancing the total project effort through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, and other senior and volunteer programs.
  - i) Keeping AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council members informed and soliciting their advice on matters affecting project operation; providing staff assistance to the advisory council.
  - j) Working in cooperation with sponsor staff, advisory council members, and volunteer station staff to obtain resources for the project.
  - k) Providing information and support to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
  - l) Appraising AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's performance.

See [Appendix C.4](#) for a sample position description for a Project Director



- m) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.
- n) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by AmeriCorps.
- o) Preparing and submitting applications and requests for amendments in the electronic grants system.

#### **5.4.2 Authorized Representatives**

The Authorized Representative is an individual in your organization who has the authority to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. This individual should be different than the Project Director. This individual certifies all grant applications and amendments and, in doing so, electronically signs the assurances for your grant. This individual will need eGrants access and may have either Grantee or Grantee Administrator permissions. If you need to change your Authorized Representative, reach out to your portfolio manager.

#### **5.4.3 Project Coordinators**

When funds allow, and the project director is in need of professional assistance, additional staff may be hired to help coordinate project activities.

Coordinator responsibilities may include, for example:

- 1) Coordinating and monitoring project activities including recruitment, in-service training, supervisory arrangements, and other activities in cooperation with the project director and appropriate volunteer station staff.
- 2) Coordinating AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' assignments including assisting volunteer station staff to develop volunteer assignment plans and volunteer activities and monitoring progress toward achieving the expected outcomes and impact specified in assignment plans.
- 3) Enhancing the total project effort through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, and other senior and volunteer programs.
- 4) Providing information and support to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- 5) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.
- 6) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by AmeriCorps Seniors as funding allows.

#### **5.4.4 Volunteer Supervision**

##### **5.4.4.1 Staff Responsibility**

- 1) The project staff's general responsibility regarding the supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is to:
  - a) Ensure that volunteer stations designate a staff member to provide day-to-day supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers while on assignment and that supervision is effective.
  - b) Concur with the volunteer station staff's selection of children for assignment to each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.
  - c) Ensure maintenance of person-to-person relationships between AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and children to whom they are assigned.
  - d) Provide orientation and regular in-service training to explain policies, enhance skills related to assignments, provide information concerning community services available to

- low-income older persons, and arrange for group discussion to share experiences and address issues.
- 2) Specific supervisory practices vary from project to project and derive from project oversight obligations identified in the Memorandum of Understanding and in individual volunteer assignment plans.

Examples are:

- a) Clarifying with volunteer stations the arrangements for days and hours of service and the agreed-upon activities defined in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- b) Making periodic site visits to volunteer stations and in-home sites to monitor the satisfaction of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with their assignments and the progress of children in reaching established objectives; determining, in coordination with the volunteer station, whether or not the services of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are appropriate to the child's needs or whether the volunteer should be reassigned.

## **5.5 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR BUILDING PROJECT STAFF**

Effective practices for creating and sustaining a strong working relationship among the sponsor's executive and fiscal staff, the project director, and other project staff include:

- A. Sponsor leadership and the project director establish and maintain a productive working relationship based on clear communication and mutual support;
- B. The project director has clearly defined responsibilities and written policies and procedures for project operations and support;
- C. The sponsor develops and maintains clear lines of reporting between project staff and the sponsor's executive and fiscal staff;
- D. The sponsor develops a written job description for each project staff position and annually reviews job descriptions for any changes in roles or responsibilities;
- E. The sponsor provides staff with high quality supervision and support to maximize job performance;
- F. The sponsor ensures project staff receive an orientation to the AmeriCorps Seniors, AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program, and the project prior to their assuming project responsibilities;
- G. The sponsor provides project staff with opportunities to enhance their understanding of and skills in meeting the needs of the community;
- H. The sponsor encourages project staff to showcase their expertise as national and community service professionals by presenting at conferences, workshops, or community forums;
- I. The sponsor includes project staff in professional development opportunities available to all other agency staff;
- J. The sponsor ensures that each project staff member sets performance goals for his or her work on an annual basis and is evaluated annually on that basis;

- K. The sponsor includes the project director as an integral member of the agency's staff;
- L. The sponsor recognizes the achievements of project staff through specific activities and/or events comparable to other agency staff;
- M. The sponsor seeks ethnic, racial, cultural, and skills diversity in volunteer teams and/or working groups that address project planning, operations, and assessment; and
- N. The sponsor seeks the participation of individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and with a variety of skills in project management and decision-making.

## 6 VOLUNTEER STATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are recruited and enrolled by the project and placed with or through volunteer stations. Volunteer stations are encouraged to support AmeriCorps Seniors FGP by referring prospective volunteers to the project.

#### 6.1.1 Characteristics of Volunteer Stations

A volunteer station is a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Neither informal groups nor private homes qualify as volunteer stations ([45 CFR 2552.12](#)).

- A. Proprietary health care organizations are private, for-profit health care organizations that serve one or more vulnerable populations ([45 CFR 2552.12](#)). As noted above, licensed proprietary health-care organizations may be volunteer stations. The entity responsible for licensing varies from state to state and may even vary based on the type of health care organization e.g., hospital, nursing home, assisted living facility. If project sponsors are unsure of the licensing body in their state, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) offers the site [healthfinder.gov](#) that has a listing of state agencies on health, which for many states, but not all, will be the entity responsible for health-care organization licensing. Additionally, if sponsors are uncertain of their state's licensing requirements, HHS is a good place to start, as well as the state entity responsible for licensing and regulating health care organizations if known.
- B. All such placements must limit volunteer assignments to those which provide direct and traditional assistance to patients, such as visiting, teaching, counseling, entertaining, etc. Placements must not displace paid employees, must not supplant the hiring of paid employees, and must avoid other staff or clerical assignments which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization.
- C. The Memorandum of Understanding with such volunteer stations must include detailed provisions to ensure compliance with program regulations regarding *Non-displacement of Employed Workers and Non-impairment of Contracts for Service* ([45 CFR 1216.1.1 - 1216.1.4](#)).
- D. Individual private homes may not be volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through a volunteer station (see *In-Home Assignments* in Chapter 7).
- E. Volunteer stations are located within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application.
- F. Establish a process to ensure that the volunteer station sites are appropriate per the regulations.

Looking to engage a school or school district as a station? The [AmeriCorps Superintendent's & Principal's Toolkit](#) can help! Developed to help education leaders understand how they can use national service to achieve their goals, it contains practical examples of how AmeriCorps Seniors has worked in school settings before and data on its educational impact.

### **6.1.2 Types of Volunteer Stations**

Potential volunteer stations include but are not limited to the following types of agencies or organizations, if they serve eligible children as defined in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP regulations ([45 CFR 2552.12](#)):

<b>Examples of Volunteer Stations</b>	
Before/After School Programs	Head Start Centers
Development Disability Centers	Juvenile Corrections Centers
Foster Care Agencies	Charter Schools
Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools

### **6.1.3 AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Project or Sponsor as Volunteer Station**

The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project itself may function as a volunteer station or initiate special volunteer activities provided that AmeriCorps Seniors agrees that these activities are in accordance with program objectives outlined in the grant and will not hinder overall project operations ([45 CFR 2552.61](#)).

### **6.1.4 Volunteer Station Cash or In-Kind Support of Volunteers**

- 1) In accordance with [45 CFR 2552.121\(c\)](#) an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in a station may contribute to the financial support of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project. However, this support shall not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional volunteers or pay for other volunteer support costs, the agreement must be stated in the written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the station.
- 2) When establishing such support, the best time for a project director to raise the possibility of financial support is when he or she is meeting with a potential station to establish the terms of the MOU. The discussions with the station representative should be clear that any donation is voluntary, not a fee for service, or a requirement of program participation. In addition:
  - The MOU must document the terms established, using language that confirms the donation is voluntary, not a fee for service, or a condition of program participation.
  - There should be no consideration given to cost per volunteer, number of hours served, or number of beneficiaries being served when determining a donation amount. Rather, the commitment to donate funding to the project should be stated in a way that demonstrates community support for the program.
- 3) The sponsor must withdraw services if the station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the MOU diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations. Cash or in-kind support from a station should not be confused with fee-for-service. See [Appendix A.12](#) for more *information*.

### **6.1.5 Volunteer Station Roster**

A current roster of volunteer stations must be included in the electronic grants management system with each grant renewal or continuation application. For all newly awarded grantees, station rosters should be submitted no later than six months after the grant begins. Projects will enter the names and addresses of their stations, the names and contact information for the volunteer station

supervisors, a various other information for each station. Step-by step instructions for developing and submitting Station Rosters are found on the [FGP grantee](#) webpage.

## **6.2 VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.2.1 Responsibilities of AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer in Stations**

Individual volunteer assignment plans are required for all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers ([45 CFR 2552.72](#)). Assignment plans are developed by the station in collaboration with the project staff of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP. The assignment plan must be approved and signed by the project staff on behalf of the sponsor, station representative, and the volunteer. If verification of the child's need is included in the assignment plan, the plan must be signed by the appropriate professional. (See [Appendix D.1](#) for a sample Volunteer Assignment Plan.)

#### 1) Development of Volunteer Assignment Plans

The following steps are recommended to develop volunteer assignment plans:

- a) Identify prospective children to be served;
- b) Document the specific need(s) of the child as verified by an appropriate professional;
- c) Describe the activities the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer will perform, the schedule for their performance, and the supervisory relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer station;
- d) Describe the expected results of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's activities;
- e) Describe the expected impact on the child of attaining the expected results; and
- f) Format the assignment plan, to show, by their respective signatures, the acceptance of the plan by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and approval by project and station staff.

#### 2) Management of Assignment Plans

- a) Volunteer assignment plans should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain current and appropriate for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and their clients.
- b) Annually, a review of each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer impact should be performed, which examines:
  - c) The child's needs;
  - d) The service activities performed, adjustments made, and potential areas for improvement;
  - e) Adherence to planned schedule and adjustments made;
  - f) Results or accomplishments achieved; and
  - g) Impact on the child.

### **6.2.2 Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments**

Under [45 CFR 2552.62\(d\)](#) volunteer stations that manage assignments in private homes must obtain a Letter of Agreement describing and authorizing the volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP activities in each home See [Chapter 7: Volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Assignments](#) for more information on Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments.

### **6.2.3 Volunteer Station Participation in Training Events**

- 1) During the initial orientation of volunteers, project staff are encouraged to involve volunteer station staff in the program overview and explanation of services and volunteer activities. This may be accomplished through group presentations in formal classroom exercises and station site visits.
- 2) Project staff are also encouraged to utilize volunteer station staff and other community resource professionals to cooperatively plan and implement monthly in-service training events.
- 3) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer assignments at some volunteer stations may necessitate training over and above the 20 hours of pre-service orientation and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training (45 CFR 2552.23(f)).

### **6.2.4 Volunteer Station Supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

Volunteer stations are responsible for the daily supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers on assignment. The quality of supervision or support is the most critical factor, after the assignment itself, in contributing to the success of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer experience. Supervision should be on going and constructive. The volunteer station supervisor may be a different staff member than the station representative who signs the MOU. Supervision includes:

- 1) Development of individual volunteer assignment plans in collaboration with project staff.
- 2) Providing regular and on-site supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer performance on assignments.
- 3) Monitoring of volunteer activities regularly to ensure that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and children are satisfied with the assignment and, with project staff, determine the continued appropriateness of the assignment.
- 4) Annually completing written volunteer performance appraisals
- 5) Referring AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to project staff for possible reassignment, transfer, or termination.
- 6) Carrying out other responsibilities identified in Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Agreement, and individual plans.

### **6.2.5 Volunteer Station Responsibilities Concerning Transportation**

Volunteer stations are responsible for arranging AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP travel between different assignments with the same station and for associated costs, unless otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding.

### **6.2.6 Other Volunteer Station Responsibilities**

- 1) Assisting in the provision of appropriate volunteer recognition activities.
- 2) Providing for volunteer safety.
- 3) Keeping records and preparing reports required by the sponsor, including:
  - a) Volunteer timesheets.
  - b) Updates and accomplishments relating to the written volunteer assignment plans.
  - c) Data and information to document and report accomplishments and impacts for the children and other data needed for AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Progress Reports.
  - d) Volunteer performance reports.

- e) Testimonials and examples of how AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers meet the needs and improve the lives of children served as well as of impact on the capabilities of the volunteer station and its staff to carry out the station's mission and/or achieve its goals, objectives, responsibilities to clients, etc.

## **6.3 PREPARATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **6.3.1 Purpose**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which must be negotiated prior to placing volunteers, describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities between the sponsor and the volunteer station. The MOU includes general conditions applicable to all projects and volunteer stations and special conditions applicable to the local volunteer station. The basic requirements for the MOU are found in the regulations at [45 CFR 2552.23\(c\) \(2\)](#) (See [Appendix C.1](#) for a sample Memorandum of Understanding).

### **6.3.2 Renegotiating and Updating**

The MOU must be reviewed and renegotiated at least every three years. The MOU may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. The effective date of a new MOU must be on or after the date the MOU is signed. Projects are encouraged to require volunteer stations to notify them as soon as any circumstances arise which could affect or require changing the provisions of the MOU, such as the volunteer station's ability to meet commitments for providing specified contributions toward project costs, changes in the sites where volunteers serve, or other conditions which have a bearing on volunteer assignments.

### **6.3.3 Content**

Each volunteer station must have a MOU in effect, which ensures the placement of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. The MOU is a formal arrangement between the sponsoring organization and the volunteer station and in many cases, it serves as the primary source of documentation establishing the relationship between entities.

As set forth in [45 CFR 2552.23\(c\) \(2\)](#), the Memorandum of Understanding must:

- 1) Be negotiated prior to placement;
- 2) Specify the mutual responsibilities of the station and sponsor;
- 3) Be renegotiated at least every three years; and
- 4) State that the volunteer station assures it will not discriminate against AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.

The MOU should be customized to meet the needs of the project and the volunteer stations. See [Appendix C.1](#) for a sample MOU form.

**In addition to the above requirements, we highly recommend that you include:**

- 1) The name, street and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the volunteer station.



- 2) The name of the primary volunteer station staff member responsible for day-to-day supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and a description of supervisory arrangements.
- 3) Volunteer station and sponsor contributions to support AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers (meals, insurance, transportation, physical examinations (if applicable), uniforms, and recognition) and/or other project costs.
- 4) A data sharing agreement that includes a description of the data needed from the volunteer station to complete the project's performance measures, a schedule for delivery, and a description of who will collect the data. See [Appendix A.13](#) for a sample data sharing agreement.
- 5) An assurance that the volunteer station is a public or non-profit organization or a proprietary health care agency.
- 6) A description of prohibited activities and special limitations (outlined in Chapter 2).
- 7) An agreement that the volunteer station shall provide specific written individual volunteer assignment plans for each volunteer prior to assignment.
- 8) An agreement that the volunteer station shall verify that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve only children and youth with special and exceptional needs, or in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development, who are less than 21 years of age.
- 9) Provision for a Letter of Agreement for in-home assignments (See [Appendix C.10](#) for more information,)
- 10) Provision for ensuring that the National Service Criminal History Check meets all AmeriCorps Seniors requirements is prior to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers beginning their service.
- 11) Provision for the safety of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers while on assignment.
- 12) An assurance that the volunteer station provides reasonable accommodation(s) for persons with disabilities (including those with mobility, hearing, vision, mental and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) to participate in programs and activities.
- 13) An agreement that the volunteer station shall provide required reports.

**You may also want to include:**

- 1) An estimate of the number of AmeriCorps Senior volunteer assignments projected to be available with or through the volunteer station.
- 2) A brief description of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer assignment(s).
- 3) A listing of geographic locations/sites, other than private homes, where volunteers will serve through the volunteer station and the number of volunteers placed at each site.
- 4) An estimate of the number of children to be assisted by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- 5) The average number of persons the volunteer station serves annually.

**6.3.4 Management of Volunteer Stations**

- 1) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may be placed with more than one volunteer station, depending on the need for service and individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' capabilities.

- 2) The sponsor should appraise all volunteer stations regularly to determine continued viability. Assessments should include types of clients served, supervision and training provided AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, compliance with program regulations, data collection requirements, and other support.
- 3) Establish a process to ensure that the volunteer station sites are adhering to the MOU.

## **6.4 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR MANAGING VOLUNTEER STATIONS**

### **I. Effective Practices for Developing Volunteer Stations**

The sponsor develops a system of volunteer stations that:

- A. Addresses significant needs of the community as validated by community-accepted studies and reports prepared by government, community groups, or educational institutions;
- B. Provides a sufficient number of stations that are accessible to individuals with disabilities;
- C. Is manageable in terms of size and complexity to ensure that ongoing interaction, communication, and monitoring of stations are realistic.
- D. Incorporates the abilities, experience, and needs of senior volunteers in their programs and operations.

### **II. Effective Practices for Communication between the Project and Volunteer Stations**

The sponsor establishes clear and effective systems of communication between the project and volunteer stations by:

- A. Conducting an orientation for station staff about the AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, and the project prior to the placement of volunteers.
- B. Communicating to the volunteer stations its policies on the terms and conditions of volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP service; volunteer service termination; and procedures for volunteers to appeal adverse decisions related to volunteer stations.
- C. Providing volunteer stations with ongoing information and/or training about the project, its performance measurement goals, and the role of the volunteer station in meeting those goals.
- D. Developing a checklist, guidance, and/or criteria that identifies factors in selecting volunteer stations.
- E. Developing criteria for the optimal number of volunteers serving at each station.

### **III. Effective Practices for Working with Volunteer Stations to Achieve Performance Measures**

- A. The sponsor and project staff make informed decisions about the community needs to be addressed and the volunteer stations that provide placement opportunities for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. The project:
  1. Identifies the needs and priorities that the project will address and the agencies that serve them;
  2. Uses data to document the nature and scope of the needs and why they have been selected, and works with volunteer stations on data collection methods;
  3. Consults staff, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, the volunteer stations, and the Advisory Council in determining priority community needs on which the project will focus;

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 6: Volunteer Stations*

4. Works with each volunteer station to determine the service to which AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are assigned; and
  5. Identifies and communicates its anticipated accomplishments and goals to the volunteer station supervisors.
- B. The project works with volunteer stations to collect data that measures progress in achieving the anticipated performance measurement targets. The project and volunteer stations:
1. Work together to determine the types of data needed to measure progress in achieving its output and outcome targets;
  2. Determine, prior to initiating service efforts, the data collection instrument descriptions it will use as the standards for measuring and reporting progress;
  3. Collaborate to develop and implement an information system that utilizes existing data whenever possible, produces the information needed to demonstrate outputs and outcomes; and allows information to be easily retrieved;
  4. Consistently and accurately provide the needed data;
  5. Use the assessment to adjust service assignments and the project's portfolio of volunteer stations;
  6. Work together to use the information related to accomplishments to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project's programming and to develop specific steps to strengthen volunteer services provided in the community; and
  7. Work together to modify volunteer assignments to more effectively meet the identified needs.

## **7 AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNMENTS**

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### **7.1 CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **7.1.1 General Criteria**

AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects will develop volunteer assignments in alignment with AmeriCorps Seniors FGP performance measure work plans and outcomes and will do so prior to the recruitment of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Volunteer assignments should incorporate how the assignment will support performance goals and the service described in the proposed work plans. Assignments serve the dual purpose of providing a high-quality experience for volunteers and meeting the critical needs of children and youth served.

#### **7.1.2 AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Assignments**

Volunteer station professional staff select the children to be served and prepare a volunteer assignment plan, approved by the project director, for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to use as a guide in serving their assigned children. Confidentiality concerning the identity and needs of the specific children served must be respected. For example, the sample assignment plan included as [Appendix D.1](#) suggests that for reasons of confidentiality a pseudonym may be used to identify individual children. All assignments must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Assignments will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved academic, social, or emotional development outcomes for children served.
- 2) Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the population served. Each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer must be assigned to individual children in order to develop a personal relationship with each child.
- 3) Assignments should include activities that lead to measurable outcome-based results as noted in the Grant Application Guidelines.
- 4) Assignments may not include administrative support service to the volunteer station.
- 5) Individuals served by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be children with special or exceptional needs or children in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development.
- 6) An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer must serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week, not to exceed a total of 2,080 hours per year (45 CFR 2552.51).
- 7) Assignments and activities should serve the dual purpose of providing a high-quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers and meet critical community needs that are aligned with national performance measures and provide specific outcomes for the children served.
- 8) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may assist small groups when, by doing so, they can continue to directly serve the needs of their assigned children. Such as when the assigned child is a part of a small group or when socialization is an outcome objective for the child.
- 9) Volunteer stations provide a written outline of duties or description of individual assignments ([45 CFR 2552.12](#) and [2552.62](#)). These should be maintained on file in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP office or at the volunteer station and a copy should be given to each volunteer when assigned. Written assignments help to identify and clarify what the volunteer

is expected to do and help to avoid misunderstanding (See [Appendix D.1](#) for a sample volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP assignment description).

Appropriate Assignments	Inappropriate Assignments
Encouraging the social and emotional development of disadvantaged young children	Answering telephones in the front office
Reading to a child in a Head Start program	Preparing classroom materials or performing other teacher's-aide activities
Teaching English to a child for whom it is a second language	Being solely responsible for watching children while a teacher or instructor is otherwise engaged
Tutoring disadvantaged youth towards GED completion	Any role that would otherwise be performed by an employed worker

## **7.2 SELECTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1) Assignments and terms of service, including the service schedule, should reflect individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer preferences and skill set along with the needs of children. Project and volunteer station staff should ensure that a range of service opportunities are available to provide a choice of assignments for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- 2) Because AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are a limited resource, assignments should be carefully selected, taking into account outcomes objectives for children with special and exceptional needs, or in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development, such as their potential to achieve significant improvements in their lives.

### **7.2.1 In-Home Assignments**

#### **7.2.1.1 Careful Planning with Volunteer Stations**

In home assignments of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers require planning by the sponsor and by volunteer station professional staff in cooperation with child and parent. Where an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer serves a child in home and within the context of the child's family, volunteer activities must primarily and directly benefit the child.

#### **7.2.1.2 Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments**

- 1) According to [45 CFR 2552.62\(c\)](#) volunteer stations managing assignments in private homes must develop a Letter of Agreement describing and authorizing the volunteer activities in each home. The requirement for Letters of Agreement must be incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 2) Letters of Agreement contain a statement authorizing a volunteer assignment in a person's home and designating the activities to be performed. The Agreement also defines

arrangements for days and hours of service and the specific plan for the volunteer's supervision. The person to be served (or their legal guardian), the volunteer station, and the sponsor sign the letter of agreement.

- 3) The Letter of Agreement provides a common understanding of what the volunteer will and will not do while on an in-home assignment. Such an agreement is not required for casual or friendly visiting that is not part of a regular, ongoing program of activities organized by a volunteer station. For example, the delivery of meals to a home would normally not require a Letter of Agreement.
- 4) In some cases, projects may work with organizations, such as hospices, which have obtained Letters of Agreement, or equivalent written agreements with their individual clients. In these cases, organizations may sign general letters of agreement covering all of the organization's home-based clients and that identify clients to be served and that specify volunteer activities, rather than obtaining individual letters for each client. The Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station must reference any such agreements.
- 5) Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments may be included in a volunteer's assignment plan if the assignment plan includes all the information above and all required signatures. A template assignment plan is included in [Appendix D.1](#) and a template letter of agreement for in-home assignment is included in [Appendix C.10](#). A sponsor may combine these templates to address this situation, if appropriate.

### **7.2.2 Teleservice**

AmeriCorps Seniors projects have service opportunities that lend themselves to teleservice, it is important that any project choosing to include an element of teleservice has a policy in place to guide volunteers and stations. Teleservice is appropriate only when the activity can be meaningfully supervised, and the hours verified independently. If a sponsor determines that teleservice is appropriate in unique situations, it must establish a policy that addresses the following:

- Written authorization of teleservice from your portfolio manager in advance
- Expectations of the communication requirements between supervisors and teleserving volunteers
- Mitigation of the increased risk of time and attendance abuse
- Appropriate supervision including validation of the activities to be performed, and
- Verification of hours claimed.

Sponsors should be aware that their staff may be subject to legal sanctions for erroneously certifying that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have valid service hours for time claimed in teleservice. In addition, there are legal and financial penalties for knowingly submitting false claims to the government.

Please see [A.16. Technology Support Training](#) for additional support on implementation for teleservice activities.

## **7.3 CHILDREN SERVED BY AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS IN THE FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM**

### **7.3.1 Age of Children**

- 1) Children assigned to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be under 21 years of age.
- 2) When an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is assigned to a child with a disability, the assignment may continue beyond the child's 21st birthday, provided the following conditions specified in [45 CFR 2552.82](#) are met:
  - a) The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer was assigned to the child before the child reached 21 years of age.
  - b) The volunteer station professional staff responsible for the child's care certifies that continued assignment is in the best interest of both the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and the child.
  - c) The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, sponsor, volunteer station professional staff, and the child's parent or person legally responsible for the child, agree to the continued assignment.
- 3) In cases where the assigned AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer becomes unavailable to serve a particular individual with a disability, the sponsor may select another AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer to continue the service.

### **7.3.2 Selection of Children to be Served**

Volunteer station professional staff are responsible for, and project staff must concur in, the selection of individual children to be served by each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in accordance with the criteria and definitions in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP regulations for children with special needs, children having exceptional needs, or children in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development ([45 CFR 2552.12](#) and [45 CFR 2552.23](#)). In an educational setting, the professional may be an educator, counselor, or other appropriate professional. In a health setting, the professional may be a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, registered nurse or licensed practical nurse, physical therapist, or similar professional. In these and other settings, the primary requirement is that the person evaluating the child's need has had professional training in a field directly related to the child's need.

#### *8.3.2.1 Children having exceptional needs defined*

In AmeriCorps Seniors FGP regulation 45 CFR 2552.12, Children having Exceptional Needs are defined as:

Children who have a developmental disability, such as those who have autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy or epilepsy, a visual impairment, speech impairment, hearing impairment, or orthopedic impairment, an emotional or behavioral disorder, a language disorder, a specific learning disability, multiple disabilities, other significant health impairments, or have literacy, math or other educational assistance needs. Before an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is assigned to the child, existence of a child's exceptional need shall be verified by an appropriate professional, such as a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, including school psychologists, registered nurse or licensed practical nurse, speech therapist, licensed clinical social worker, or educator.

### *8.3.2.2 Children with special needs defined*

In AmeriCorps Seniors FGP regulation 45 CFR 2552.12, Children with special needs are defined as:

Children who are abused or neglected; in need of foster care; adjudicated youth; homeless youths; teen-age parents; and children in need of protective intervention in their homes. Existence of a child's special need shall be verified by an appropriate professional before an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is assigned to the child.

## **7.4 TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1) When possible, plans should be made to phase out the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer to child relationship gradually to avoid a sudden disruption. Under the following conditions, discontinuance of a relationship should be arranged with the guidance of volunteer station professional staff when a:
  - a) Child's need for individual attention through a person-to-person relationship diminishes.
  - b) Relationship is no longer satisfying for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.
  - c) Child becomes unmanageable in terms of size, strength, or behavior.
  - d) Child reaches age 21 (see above for exception).
  - e) Conflict between the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and the child's parent is apparent.
- 2) Regardless of the cause of termination of an assignment, the decision must be made jointly by project and volunteer station staff, with input of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, if appropriate.
- 3) Sponsors are asked to keep the portfolio manager fully informed in cases of terminations, voluntary or otherwise, that have potential legal implications for AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff or the project.

## **7.5 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

### **I. Effective Practices for Drawing on the Unique Qualities of Volunteers to Meet the Needs of the Community and those Served**

The project:

- A. Ensures variety among volunteer stations such that volunteer assignments appeal to a diverse group of volunteers and accommodate varying volunteer skills and interests;
- B. Works with volunteer stations to involve volunteers in developing volunteer assignments;
- C. Routinely notifies volunteers of new volunteer assignments that are developed or become available; and
- D. Ensures that volunteer stations provide volunteer assignments that challenge volunteers to be advocates on behalf of the children they serve and/or their community.
- E. For outcome-based assignments, ensures that the assignment supports the projects performance measure outcomes.



## **II. Effective Practices for Ensuring the Safety of AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

The project:

- A. Addresses all relevant safety issues, including service conditions at volunteer stations, prior to permitting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to begin their assignments;
- B. Addresses reasonable accommodation to volunteers who are qualified individuals with disabilities according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act;
- C. Works closely with volunteer stations to ensure that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are provided with pre-service and ongoing training on safety issues;
- D. Works jointly with volunteer stations to assess, on a regular basis, safety issues related to AmeriCorps Seniors FGP service; and
- E. Promptly and effectively responds to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' emergencies and complaints and designates a staff person to respond to such concerns.

## **III. Effective Practices for Communicating with AmeriCorps Senior Volunteers**

The project clearly communicates with AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers about their roles and responsibilities by:

- A. Developing a written volunteer assignment description that specifies the needs of the community and the role and activities of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in delivering the needed services (See [Appendix D.1](#) for an example of an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP assignment description form).
- B. Providing volunteers with a handbook that includes project policies and procedures, the conditions and terms of volunteer service, holidays, service schedules, and cost reimbursements.
- C. Ensuring that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers know their key contacts and sources of assistance or help during their service, and how to contact them.
- D. Routinely addressing roles and responsibilities of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers during in-service training.

The project encourages volunteer stations to set up a process for appraising and documenting volunteer performance that provides feedback and guidance to each volunteer in key areas such as: reliability, actual progress and outcomes, initiative, and leadership.

## **8 VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP**

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### **8.1 ELIGIBILITY TO BE ENROLLED**

#### **8.1.1 Requirements**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be 55 years of age or older and be capable of serving children with exceptional or special needs, or children who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be able to provide such service without detriment to either themselves or the children served and be willing to abide by the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program requirements (Section 211(a) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended [\(45 CFR 2552.23\)](#). Volunteers are not required to reside in the Geographic Service Area they are serving in.

#### **8.1.2 Non-Discrimination**

Eligibility to be an volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP may not be restricted on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service ([45 CFR 2552.41\(b\)](#)).

#### **8.1.3 Income Eligibility Requirement**

To be enrolled and receive a stipend, an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer cannot have an annual income, from all sources, deducting allowable medical expenses, that exceeds the income eligibility guideline for the state in which he or she resides ([45 CFR 2552.43](#)). Current income eligibility levels – including high costs areas – are posted on the [FGP grantee](#) website at; or are available by contacting the appropriate portfolio manager.

#### **8.1.4 Non-Stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers**

Persons aged 55 or older with incomes that exceed eligibility guidelines may be enrolled in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects as non-stipended volunteers ([45 CFR 2552.101](#)). Non-stipended volunteers may serve alongside stipended volunteers and all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be treated consistently and equitably. In other words, non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers should be able to serve in FGP projects without barriers. Further, AmeriCorps encourages AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects to engage non-stipended volunteers in service when opportunities are available and when the regulatory conditions detailed below are met.

The following conditions apply to the service of non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers ([45 CFR 2552.102](#)):

- Non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must not displace or prevent eligible low-income individuals from becoming AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- No special privilege or status is granted or created among AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, whether stipended or non-stipended, and equal treatment is required.
- Training, supervision, and other support services and cost reimbursements, other than the stipend, are made available equally to all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- All regulations and requirements applicable to the program apply to all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

- Non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may contribute the costs they incur in connection with their participation in the program. An AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project may not count such contributions as part of the required non-AmeriCorps Seniors support (match) for the grant.
  - If non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers choose not to accept cost reimbursements from the sponsor e.g. transportation and/or meal reimbursements, they may do so. This forfeiture of cost reimbursements may indirectly contribute to costs to the program. However, it is important to note that any forfeited volunteer cost reimbursements cannot directly be used as required program match.
- For information on cost reimbursements for non-stipended volunteers, see Chapter 9.

Sponsors are not required to enroll non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in their program. Further, engaging non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is not a condition for a sponsor to receive a new or continuation grant (45 CFR 2552.103). Additionally, National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) are not required for non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers (45 CFR 2540.201). However, projects may opt to conduct checks on non-stipended volunteers for consistency and safety. For more information on the AmeriCorps Seniors NSCHC Seniors requirements, you may go to <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check> or contact your portfolio manager.

#### **8.1.4.1 Role of Non-Stipended AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

Non-stipended volunteers serving in the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer Program must serve in the same roles as stipended volunteers. Non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer assignments must provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved academic, social, or emotional development outcomes for children served. The assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the children served. Each non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer must be assigned to individual children and should include activities that lead to measurable outcomes.

## **8.2 RECRUITMENT OF AMERICORPS SENIORS' VOLUNTEERS**

### **8.2.1 Preparation**

- 1) Before AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are placed at a station, the sponsor must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and have developed, in conjunction with the volunteer station, written assignment descriptions for each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer. (See [Appendix D.1](#) for a sample AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer assignment description.)
- 2) Recruitment and enrollment of eligible AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are project responsibilities and should not be delegated to volunteer stations. However, recruitment assistance for new AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to the sponsor, in the form of referrals, may come from the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council, volunteer stations, and other AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- 3) The sponsor should develop a volunteer recruitment plan that takes into account the following, among other considerations:
  - a. Location of “active adult” or retirement communities, senior citizen housing, senior centers, clubs, and other settings where people aged 55 and older gather or receive services.

- b. Local employers of age eligible, or soon to be eligible, employers in both the private and public sectors, as well as independent businesses and trades people.
  - c. Distance (in both miles and time) between the potential volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and places of assignment.
  - d. Modes and estimated costs of available public or private transportation.
- 4) Special efforts should be made to recruit and assign members of minority groups, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach individuals and groups in the service area which are under-represented in the project. Traditionally more women than men have been involved as volunteers in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program. Projects are encouraged to be creative in finding ways to attract men to become AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
  - 5) AmeriCorps Seniors FGP stresses recruitment and enrollment of eligible persons not already volunteering.
  - 6) Recruitment or selection of an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may not be based on any requirement of employment experience or formal education ([45 CFR 2552.41](#)).

### **8.2.2 Choosing Recruitment Methods**

Although direct, face-to-face communication with prospective volunteers is most productive, a variety of recruitment methods may be used to reach either broad audiences or specific populations. The most feasible method may depend on:

- 1) Availability of recruitment resources (the project's website, social media, newspapers, access to radio and television public service time, available staff, outreach volunteers, etc.).
- 2) Community acceptance of volunteer programs and federally funded programs.
- 3) The degree to which communication links exist with seniors, including older members of minority groups, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach community members.

### **8.2.3 Examples of Methods**

Recruitment can be done through:

- 1) Contacting potential recruits individually;
- 2) Presently enrolled AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers;
- 3) Contacting agencies and organizations frequented by older persons, such as senior centers, senior nutrition projects, and retiree organizations such as retired teachers' associations, and retired federal employees' associations;
- 4) Contacting religious and civic groups and other community agencies;
- 5) Contacting other AmeriCorps Seniors-supported programs in your area:  
<https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact>;
- 6) Recruiting persons on waiting lists for the [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#) (Title V of the Older Americans Act)
- 7) Making presentations or providing materials for distribution at the types of agencies or organizations mentioned above;
- 8) Advertising through websites, web-based volunteer recruitment systems including *AllforGood.org* (see below), the sponsoring agency's newsletter, newspaper articles, public service radio or television interviews, or "spot" public announcements, and the use of social media;

9) Contacting older persons individually.

#### **8.2.4 Targeting Recruitment**

Targeting recruitment where there is the best possibility of obtaining the most publicity and results, may result in organizations or locations being included where older persons are presently serving as volunteers. Projects should, however, avoid recruiting volunteers away from organizations where they are already volunteering and thus negatively impacting the project's reputation in the community.

#### **8.2.5 Web-Based Recruitment**

##### **8.2.5.1 Project Websites**

Increasing numbers of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects have developed appealing websites designed to provide basic information about volunteer opportunities and how to express interest in volunteering.

##### **8.2.5.2 AllforGood.org**

[All for Good](#) is a free online volunteer recruitment system where projects can register their organizations and post their volunteer opportunities and connect with volunteers to learn about them.

##### **8.2.5.3 Social Networks**

A *Social Network* describes any virtual media that enables users to create public profiles within it and form relationships with other users of that same space who access their profile. Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based websites, online discussion forms, chatrooms and other social spaces online and primarily contain user-generated content. Examples of social networks are Facebook, X, and YouTube channels, and others described below:

#### **a) Key Terms**

- Blog
  - A website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video, used to communicate information and receive feedback.
- Online Collaborative and Discussion Groups
  - A discussion group format to connect with people, access information, and communicate effectively over email and on the web.
  - You control the members of the discussion group.
  - No hardware or software to buy, install or maintain.
  - Access from anywhere, even from mobile devices.
- Online Volunteer Recruitment Sites
  - Online network that connects volunteers with nonprofit organizations.
  - Resource for volunteers to search for volunteer opportunities in their neighborhood, community, city and nationally.
  - When volunteers see your listing, they simply click on it to directly connect with your organization and get involved.

#### **b) [AmeriCorps Social Media Hub](#) includes:**

- YouTube
  - YouTube is a video sharing website.

- A channel on YouTube is the home page for an account. It shows the account, the account type, the public videos they've uploaded, and any user information they have entered.
- YouTube channels often display favorite videos from other users, activity streams comments, subscribers, and other social network features.
- You can control the information that appears on your channel.
- X (Formerly known as Twitter)
  - X is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages.
  - A service for friends, family, and coworkers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages.
  - Messages may contain photos, videos, and links to other social network sites.
  - AmeriCorps Seniors X handle: @AmeriCorpsSr.
  - AmeriCorps X handle: @AmeriCorps.
- Facebook
  - Facebook is an online social network website where users can post comments, share photographs, and post links to news or other interesting content on the web.
  - A service for friends, family, and coworkers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages.
  - AmeriCorps Seniors Facebook Page: AmeriCorps Seniors / @AmeriCorpsSr.
  - AmeriCorps Facebook Page: AmeriCorps / @AmeriCorps.

#### **8.2.5.4 AmeriCorps Seniors Pathfinder**

This national tool along with your local recruitment efforts, will help you find great AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. On the [AmeriCorps Seniors Pathfinder](#), interested volunteers begin their search by selecting a state, or by selecting a state and county, to return a list of nearby AmeriCorps Seniors programs. Program listings include organization name, program name, AmeriCorps Seniors parent program (e.g., FGP, SCP, RSVP), counties served, and program address. Most importantly, each listing includes contact information for that specific program. This allows prospective volunteers to ask questions, get the information they need, and begin sooner.

Information in the program listings is drawn from what AmeriCorps Seniors grantees enter into eGrants. The counties listed are associated with active sites in the station roster, as entered by grantees. You can find instructions to update your contact information in [Appendix A. 22 Update Project Contact Information in eGrants](#).

## **8.3 SELECTION OF AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS**

### **8.3.1 Interviewing Potential AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

After expressing an interest in volunteering, potential AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers should be scheduled for interviews with AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project staff as soon as possible. The initial interview should be private and confidential, allowing adequate time for discussion. These interviews should be conducted in the most efficient manner for AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff and the potential volunteer either in person, via phone, or other means such as Skype.

- a) The initial interview is the time to become acquainted with and establish a friendly, mutually supportive relationship with the prospective volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP.
- b) Interview techniques should relate to project goals and to the background, hobbies, and special interests of applicants.

Suggested interview topics include:

- Roles, assignments, and types of activities.
- Interests of the applicant and motivation to serve.
- Background information on the potential volunteer including work and volunteer history.
- Volunteer cost reimbursements and related responsibilities.
- Income eligibility requirements.
- National Service Criminal History Check requirements (See NSCHC section in this chapter).
- Description of volunteer stations and specific types of assignments currently available.
- Special needs of children to be served.
- Volunteer benefits and responsibilities.
- Availability of support from professional supervisors
- Availability of transportation arrangements.
- Follow-up support, recognition activities, and newsletter offered by AmeriCorps Seniors FGP.
- Whether the applicant is confident that he or she is able to perform available assignments with, or without, reasonable accommodations.

### **8.3.2 Determining Income Eligibility**

- 1) During or after the interview the prospective AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' income is reviewed for the purpose of establishing eligibility (see [Appendix C.6](#) for a sample income review form). In this review, the project director must ascertain and document the applicant's income from all sources. According to [45 CFR 2552.44](#), "income" refers to total cash receipts before taxes from all sources, including:
  - a) Money, wages and salaries before any deduction;
  - b) Receipts from self-employment or from a farm or business after deductions for business or farm expenses;
  - c) Regular payments for public assistance, Social Security, Unemployment or Workers Compensation, alimony, child support, and military family allotments;
  - d) Government employee pensions, private pensions, regular insurance or annuity payments, and 401(k) or other retirement savings plans; and
  - e) Income from dividends, interest, net rents, royalties, or income from estates and trusts.
- 2) For eligibility purposes, income does not refer to the following money receipts:
  - a) Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, sale of property, house or car, tax refunds, gifts, one-time insurance payments or compensation for injury;
  - b) Non-cash income, such as the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm or non-farm housing;
  - c) Regular payments for public assistance including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
  - d) Social Security Disability or any type of disability payment; and

- e) Food or rent received in lieu of wages.
  - f) Non-legally mandated family support
- 3) Maintain a volunteer's initial income eligibility documentation as a grant record. This means it must be maintained until at least three years from the date you submit the final FFR for the project period when the volunteer exits service or three years past the last audit, whichever is later. [Chapter 11 on Reports and Recordkeeping](#) for more information.

### **8.3.3 Income Eligibility Guideline:**

- 1) The income eligibility guideline for each state is 200 percent of the poverty line, as set forth in [42 U.S.C. 9902 \(2\)](#).
- 2) Each year, AmeriCorps Seniors publishes the income eligibility guidelines on the [FGP grantee](#) page for easy access. Use the prior year's guideline if the current year is not yet published.
- 3) For new applicants to become stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, annual income must be projected for the following 12 months, based on income at the time of application.
- 4) For AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers already serving, annual income is counted for the past 12 months.
- 5) Annual income includes the applicant or enrollee's income and that of his or her spouse, if the spouse lives in the same residence.
- 6) Allowable medical expenses are to be deducted from annual income in determining income eligibility. "Allowable medical expenses" are annual out-of-pocket medical expenses for health insurance premiums, health care services, and medications (prescription or over-the-counter) provided to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse which were not and will not be paid by Medicare, Medicaid, other insurance, or other third party, and which do not exceed 50 percent of the applicable AmeriCorps Seniors income guideline ([45 CFR 2552.43\(c\)](#)).
  - a) Long term care insurance premiums are considered to be an allowable medical expense.
- 7) Once enrolled, an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer remains eligible to serve and to receive a stipend so long as his or her income does not exceed the prescribed income eligibility guideline by 20 percent. The sponsor must review income eligibility annually ([45 CFR 2552.43\(e\)](#)). (See [Appendix C.6](#) for sample income review form.) To calculate the income eligibility threshold for a currently serving volunteer:
  - a) Lookup the current year's income eligibility guidelines on the [FGP Grantee](#) page.
  - b) Multiply the guideline for your state by 20%

#### **Example: Income Eligibility for a Serving Volunteer**

1. Visit the [FGP Grantee](#) page for this year's income eligibility guidelines. Find the right guideline for an individual based on his or her state and family size.
2. In 2019, the guideline for all states except Alaska and Hawaii for a family unit of one was \$24,980.
3. Multiply that by 20%.  
20% of \$24,980 is \$4,996.
4. Add that to the original guideline. \$24,980 + \$4,996 is \$29,976.



- c) Add the resulting figure to the guideline to determine the maximum income for stipend eligibility. See the box to the right for an example.
- 8) When more than one eligible member of a household serves as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, both members are entitled to receive a stipend.
- 9) See [45 CFR 2552.43-44](#) for further details.

#### **8.3.4 National Service Criminal History Checks**

It is critical that AmeriCorps Seniors sponsors make National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) a priority when hiring project staff and enrolling AmeriCorps Seniors FGP and SCP volunteers. Grantees that do not comply with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance. ***Please read this section and the [NSCHC webpage](#) carefully to be sure your policies and your implementation procedures comply with the requirement.*** Grantees should contact their portfolio manager for NSCHC questions or requirement clarification.

#### **8.3.5 NSCHC Overview:**

Under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act of 2009, all AmeriCorps Seniors grantees must conduct NSCHC on grant-funded staff and national service participants that receive a salary, national service education award, living allowance, or stipend under AmeriCorps Seniors grants. This includes AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP and SCP. Individuals in these positions must undergo the NSCHC process in a timely manner, or the noncompliant grantee may be subject to cost disallowance. Certain parts of the process must occur prior to charging any staff or volunteer time, to an AmeriCorps Seniors grant. Therefore, it is critical to comply with the NSCHC requirements on time, every time.

The Code of Federal Regulations outlines the National Service Criminal History Check rules and regulations in full at [45 CFR 2540.200–207](#). Additional information on NSCHC, including the required annual NSCHC e-course, an FAQ document, and links to technical assistance resources can be found on the [NSCHC webpage](#).

AmeriCorps has published a new NSCHC Regulation 45 CFR 2450.200 - .207 (effective May 1, 2021). Please see the [NSCHC Rule Summary](#) document for information on the new rule.

These NSCHC requirements are statutory minimums, and individual grantees can, and often should, supplement these with additional safeguards for vulnerable populations, such as additional screening mechanisms, additional eligibility criteria, a code of conduct, training for staff and volunteers, and a clear system for reporting and handling reports of any harm or potential harm to vulnerable populations resulting from their program. Contact your portfolio manager for more resources on ways to protect your program’s vulnerable beneficiaries.

#### **8.3.6 NSCHC Enforcement:**

***Grantees that do not comply with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance.*** More information on cost disallowance can be found in the [NSCHC Manual's Monitoring and Enforcement section](#). It is in an organization’s interest to develop a system for monitoring its own compliance.

### **8.3.7 NSCHC Resources:**

See [AmeriCorps Grantee and Sponsor/Criminal History Checks](#) for links to the regulations, requirements, and training materials. Note that resources posted on this webpage may be updated at any time, so be sure to consult the webpage directly for the most current resources.

Some of the key resources available on the NSCHC webpage are:

- Links to the required annual NSCHC eCourse training and NSCHC Learning Path in Litmos
- NSCHC Manual
- Recommendations for Effective Policies and Procedures
- NSCHC Steps Table
- NSCHC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Using NSOPW and State Repositories Manual

## **8.4 SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP**

### **8.4.1 Selection Criteria**

A full complement of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers should include a variety of personal skills and strengths. Since the project will be expected to plan a variety of assignments at volunteer stations, emphasis will be on matching a potential AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer with an already planned, suitable, and available assignment.

- 1) Selection criteria should give priority to eligible older persons who are highly motivated and have the greatest need to serve. Other criteria to consider when selecting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers include:
  - a) Ability to serve 5 to 40 hours a week;
  - b) Willingness to accept professional supervision; and
  - c) Flexibility in accepting assignments, including private homes, wherever most needed.
- 2) Interest in and ability to develop a supportive person-to-person relationship with children with exceptional or special needs on a regular basis;
- 3) Ownership of or access to a private automobile should not be a project-wide requirement but may influence selection in sparsely populated areas or for particular assignments.

### **8.4.2 Selection Documentation**

Grantees must document in writing that the required criminal history checks were conducted. Grantees must maintain the results of the criminal history check in a secure location and document in writing that the grantee considered the results in selecting the applicant. Refer to the resources on the NSCHC webpage for full documentation and compliance requirements.

### **8.4.3 Individuals Ineligible to Serve**

- 1) AmeriCorps Seniors requirements specify that individuals are ineligible to serve as AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers if they are:
  - a) Listed, or required to be listed, on a sex offender registry.
  - b) Convicted of murder as defined and described in 18 U.S.C. § 1111.

- c) Unwilling to consent to the NSCHC.
  - d) Found to have made a false statement in connection with a program's inquiry concerning the individual's criminal history.
- 2) Grantees may adopt written project policies that include other disqualifying offenses.

## **8.5 ENROLLMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE AMERICORP SENIORS FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM**

### **8.5.1 Enrollment Records**

- 1) Once the selection process is completed, the project staff formally enrolls the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP applicant into the program through the completion of an enrollment form. (See [Appendix C.2](#) for a sample volunteer enrollment form.) Potential AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must sign and date the form. The form should include designation of beneficiaries for insurance purposes and indication of personal automobile liability coverage, if applicable.
- 2) ***Please read the NSCHC webpage carefully to be sure your policies and implementation procedures comply with the requirements.*** Projects must keep documentation for the NSCHC process for each volunteer (Effective May 1, 2021, the NSOPW, state of service, state of residence, and FBI checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made by the grant recipient or subrecipient before a person begins to work or serve on an NSCHC-required grant).
- 3) Volunteer records should be updated as necessary and at least annually to ensure information is current. (See [Appendix C.5](#) for a sample volunteer information update form. See [Appendix C.2](#) for a sample enrollment checklist.)
- 4) Maintain enrollment records, including original and annual income eligibility reviews until at least three years from the date you submit the final FFR for the project period when the volunteer exits service or three years past the last audit, whichever is later. These records are critical grant records. See Chapter 11 on Reports and Recordkeeping for more information.
- 5) At the time of enrollment, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may be provided a physical examination or assistance with the cost of a physical examination. See Chapter 9, Volunteer Cost Reimbursements Detailed.

### **8.5.2 Persons Not Selected to Be AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and Reserve AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

- 1) Eligible persons not selected to serve as AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers should be counseled and referred to other community agencies which provide opportunities for older persons, including the [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#), other AmeriCorps programs, and other volunteer organizations.
- 2) Many projects maintain waiting lists or generalized contact lists to stay in touch with individuals who express interest in serving but are either not selected or not able to volunteer at a given time. These lists may be used to socialize new opportunities.
- 3) Sponsors may want to plan for more AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers than the number of volunteer service hours to allow for absences, variation in the number of hours served, and

attrition. Local experience will provide a sponsor with a more accurate basis for determining reserves (See [Appendix C.8](#) for a VSY Calculator).

## **8.6 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF AMERICORPS SENIORS' VOLUNTEERS**

### **8.6.1 Minimum Requirement**

The sponsor must provide a minimum of 20 hours of pre-service orientation to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training ([45 CFR 2552.23\(f\)](#)).

### **8.6.2 Examples and Explanation**

#### **8.6.2.1 New Volunteers**

For each volunteer's first year of service, the sponsor must provide:

- A minimum of 20 hours of *pre-service* orientation
- A minimum of 24 hours of in-service training annually.

This requirement must be met within a year of the volunteer's enrollment, not necessarily in the program year in which the volunteer enrolled in the program. See below for an example.

Note that both the 20 hours of pre-service orientation and the 24 hours of in-service training are **minimums**. Sponsors may provide orientation and training that exceeds the minimum requirement to enhance performance of assignments. Stipends may be accrued for all training and orientation activity and cost reimbursements may be provided. For suggestions on content, see Section 8.6.4 on orientation format and content below. Sponsors may also include hours of orientation and training provided by the volunteer station(s) at which the volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP will serve in this requirement.

#### ***Meeting the Requirement for New Volunteers: Example***

Hometown program provides two or four hours of in-service training every month, except for in June and July. Their project year runs from January through December, in line with the calendar year. Lily joins the program in October and receives the required 20 hours of pre-service orientation before starting service. She then attends two two-hour in-service trainings before the end of the project year.

The next project year begins, and Lily continues to attend monthly in-service trainings, and, by the end of October, the sponsor has fulfilled its minimum requirement of at least 24 hours annually of in-service training. It has provided the required 20 hours of pre-service orientation and 24 hours of in-service training in her first year as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, even though this extends across multiple program years. Though the sponsor has met the requirement at this point, she continues to attend in-service trainings regularly. (See table below.)

**New Volunteer Example: Lily**

Month and Hours of Orientation/ Training

Program Years	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL In-Service
Year 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20*	2	2	<b>4</b>
Year 2	4	2	2	2	2	0	0	4	2	2**	2***	2***	<b>24</b>

\*Lily attends 20 hours of pre-service orientation.

\*\*At this point (October), the sponsor has provided the minimum amount of training and orientation. They have provided 20 hours of pre-service training, plus 24 hours of in-service training between November and October.

\*\*\*In November and December, Lily attends in-service training regularly as any other volunteer, however she does not need to attend every session offered.

**8.6.2.2 Existing Volunteers**

After the volunteer’s first year of service, and for each successive year, the sponsor must provide a minimum of 24 hours of in-service training annually to its volunteers.

As with the orientation requirement, this is a **minimum** requirement, and sponsors may exceed it. Due to absences, leave or other issues, individual volunteers may not be able to attend all trainings. In fact, it is a good practice to plan to exceed this requirement, so that unexpected cancellations or changes do not result in a sponsor falling short of its minimum requirement. The sponsor should have reasonable policies and procedures in place that describe what constitutes a sufficient training plan for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers each year.

This training may be structured in many different ways. You will need to adapt your schedule to match the service activities available to your volunteers and other community factors. See the examples below, which are intended to demonstrate the range of different options available to you, for more information.

**Examples**

- Hometown program values a predictable schedule and finds that attendance is at its largest when the schedule is the same throughout the year. For this reason, it hosts a two-hour in-service training on the same day each month.
- Neighborhood program has a partnership with a school that requires volunteers to receive certain information at the beginning of each school year. They also like to recognize outstanding volunteers at an in-service event at the end of each school year. Consequently, they schedule a four-hour in-service training in September and a four-hour in-service training in June. They do not hold a training in December and January, when they find many volunteers are unavailable due to holidays. They hold a two-hour in-service training all other months.
- Township program operates in a rural area with harsh winters that complicates transportation. They also work extensively with schools, and so, find that service opportunities are fewer in the summer months. As a result, they focus their training and in-service in summer months, offering four-hour in-service trainings each month over the summer. They do not schedule any for months in winter when transportation is most difficult.

- Hamlet program values a regular schedule, like Hometown, but also faces some of the transportation challenges as Township. They concentrate all their training between April and September, with a four-hour training each month. They also include a four-hour training in March and October to ramp up and phase out these training activities. Note that this means they provide *more than* the minimum requirement, as they may choose to do at their discretion.

**In-Service Example: Four Models**

Month and Hours of In-Service Training

Program	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
<b>Hometown</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
<b>Neighborhood</b>	0	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	0	24
<b>Township</b>	0	0	2	2	2	4	4	4	2	2	2	0	24
<b>Hamlet</b>	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	32

**8.6.3 Documenting Orientations and Trainings**

Best practices related to documenting orientations and in-service trainings to show adherence to the requirement include maintaining the following types of information:

- A calendar of orientation and training events
- An agenda or schedule
- Sign-in sheets
- Receipts for any supplies purchased
- Invoices or in-kind donation forms for any services used, such as if a professional trainer or subject matter expert is used

**8.6.4 Orientations: Format and Content**

As explained above, sponsors must provide least 20 hours of pre-service orientation to new volunteers prior to service. Sponsors should adapt the format and content of orientations to meet the needs of their community and their program model. There is no one ideal orientation. Effective orientations also include content provided directly by the volunteer station(s) at which the volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP will serve. The information below offers suggestions and ideas that may be helpful for many different programs.

**8.6.4.1 Objectives**

An effective orientation:

- Welcomes volunteers to the national service community, helping them understand their connection to AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, other AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and the American people who support their work.
- Provides critical logistical and compliance information about your program to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and conveys information on project policies, including annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, termination, appeal procedures, and cost reimbursements like meals and transportation. Project procedures related to timesheets, insurance, and other administrative details should also be clearly explained.

- Introduces AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to each other and the people and organizations who will support them, including sponsor staff, station staff and others.
- Prepares AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to fill their role, including understanding their potential activities and the special and exceptional needs of the young people they will work with.
- Shares information about available community services that will help AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers help themselves and ultimately serve their clients better.

#### **8.6.4.2 Topics and Structure**

Develop your orientation with help from sponsor and volunteer station staff, as well as child development and other relevant professionals. Daily group training over a one- to two-week period provides efficient use of community resources and promotes team building among volunteers. Projects have found that a combination of formal orientation and hands-on experience with volunteer stations works well. This gives greater meaning to the orientation and aids new volunteers' adjustment to their assignments. Consider including current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the design, execution, and continuous improvement of your orientation.

The specific information you will cover may vary based on your community and project's needs, but most projects tend to cover some combination of the topics listed below in the pre-service component of their orientation. Review the section below on adult learning principles for some ideas on how to make the experience engaging and effective for your learners.

- **Introductions:** Introduce your new volunteers to each other and to important individuals in your program, such as sponsor and station staff. This can be done in a dedicated session or spaced out through various activities throughout the orientation.
- **Welcome to the National Service Community:** Help AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers recognize their role as part of the nationwide national service community. Consider using some of the videos or other materials on AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors available on the [AmeriCorps website](#).
- **The Role of the AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer:** What will the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers do? What are some concrete examples? What activities are appropriate and inappropriate? Consider having current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers share their experience.
- **Team-Building Exercises:** Have your AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers work together to solve problems and build trust, helping create a cohesive, supportive community of volunteers.
- **Strategies and Tactics for Working with Young People:** You could spend a significant amount of time on this topic and the most relevant activities will depend on the structure of your specific program. This is also a great opportunity to involve teachers or other specialists. Possible items to address include how to tutor, how to mentor, managing challenging behavior, assertiveness, working with teachers, working in schools and accepting supervision. You could also consider spending time acquainting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with the specific special needs they might encounter among the children they serve.

- **Policies and Procedures:** Be sure to address your AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program’s major rules and logistical systems, such as assignment plans, service policies and appeal procedures, timesheets, reimbursement for meals and transportation, and insurance. Consider spacing out this information out throughout the orientation period and provide opportunities for questions and for volunteers to practice key activities, like completing timesheets. Be sure to include information about prohibited activities. (See Chapter 2 of this Handbook.)
- **Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting and Child Advocacy:** Explain what you expect of your volunteers when they interact with children. See the chapter on “Guidelines on Interactions between Individuals” in the [Center for Disease Control’s Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth-Serving Organizations](#) for information on what to consider including. Depending on your state, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may also have specific responsibilities for reporting known or suspected child abuse. At a minimum, you should prepare them to be able to discuss a child’s physical and mental health with supervisors.
- **Support for AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers:** Introduce your new volunteers to services or information that you can provide them to help with their own needs. Your volunteers will want to feel supported, and this, in turn, will help them remain committed to your program. Remember that orientation is part of the recruitment process – you want to be sure they understand why it’s a good idea to stick with your program.
- **Graduation:** Recognize your new volunteers for completing the process. This is another great opportunity to involve current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to help welcome them into the group. Consider presenting them with a certificate or branded gear from your program.

Most programs continue new volunteers’ orientation by pairing them with experienced AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers (often called “shadowing”) for a period of time before giving new volunteers their own assignments. This is strongly recommended when possible. This allows new volunteers to see the practical aspects of a program; meet station staff, teachers, and children with a supportive volunteer next to them; and ask additional questions of existing AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

Consider checking in with the group again after they have some in-service experience to address new questions and hear about their early experiences. Finally, ask for your volunteers’ feedback following the orientation process so you can keep improving.

### **8.6.5 In-Service Trainings: Format and Content**

As with orientations, sponsors should adapt the format and content of in-service trainings to meet the needs of their community and their program model. There is no one ideal set of content for in-service trainings. The information below offers suggestions and ideas that may be helpful for many different programs.

#### **8.6.5.1 Objectives**

An effective in-service program:

- Provides AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers opportunities to build knowledge and skills that help them effectively serve young people



- Reinforces key project policies, procedures and systems to help AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers contribute to an efficient, compliant, responsible program
- Keeps AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers engaged and connected to the program
- Gives AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers access to information and services that allow them to stay healthy and active
- Recognizes AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for their service
- Meets the needs of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, as identified by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers themselves

### **8.6.5.2 Potential Topics and Structure**

For an overview of different ways to allocate and schedule in-service time, see the beginning of this section, which explains the minimum requirement.

Once you have determined your in-service schedule, you can combine multiple topics and approaches for diverse, enriching sessions. Try to include a mix of different types of activities in each. You might, for example, start with 30 minutes of reflection and small group conversations, followed by a more formal hour-long training on a specific topic, followed by a period of activities to practice. You could then close with recognition and reminders. Varying the format and structure of your in-services will incentivize participation and make them more effective.

Some potential topics you could include are:

- **Strategies and Tactics for Working with Young People:** This could take many different forms depending on your program. If your program tutors, consider training them on tutoring ideas and tactics. If it focuses on mentorship, focus there. Use your stations and other community partners to help provide and contribute content.
- **Coaching and Problem-Solving:** Have volunteers share success stories or challenges and discuss them with the group. How can your volunteers help each other?
- **Resources for Volunteers:** Engage community partners who can share resources with your AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to help them with their own needs. This, in turn, will help them be more effective in your program.
- **Program Rules and Procedures:** It never hurts to remind your volunteers about the details that make your program run. Consider refreshers on key policies or setting time aside to help them with key tasks, like updating important forms.
- **Recognition:** Build a sense of community and partnership among your AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, while also allowing volunteers to model exemplary behavior. Recognize volunteers for accomplishments and milestones and giving them opportunities to recognize each other.

### **8.6.6 Introduction to Adult Learning Principles**

Familiarity with some basic concepts about how adults learn can help make your orientations and trainings as effective as possible. You likely already have some basic knowledge of these, based on your own experiences.

Think about the kind of training that you prefer. It's likely that you learn best when a few things are true:

- You understand why what you're being taught is important
- You have time to apply what you're learning, ask questions and get involved
- You can share your own experience and learn from the experience of others who've dealt with similar challenges
- The style of training provided matches your needs – if you're a visual learner, there are some visuals. If you're an auditory learner, you have a chance to listen.

Your volunteers will appreciate these same tactics in orientation and in-service training. A number of researchers have studied how adults learn and identified a few key principles that allow adults to learn effectively. Though stated in different ways over the years, they can be boiled down to a few key concepts:

- **Choice:** Adults don't like being told what to do! Most adults are used to choosing their own activities and managing their own experiences. It's uncomfortable to surrender that sense of agency when an adult enters a training space. That discomfort can mean that your learners are thinking about how they don't want to do a certain activity, rather than the information you want to share. Practically, this means offering learners choices in their activities and getting buy-in from learners. Think about tactics like asking learners what they want to get out of a session before it begins and tailoring the session to those ideas. You can also involve learners in the design of your sessions. For example, invite current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to shape your orientation.
- **Relevance:** This is closely related to choice. Adults learn best when they clearly understand why it is in their interest to learn certain information. Practically, you can make the objectives of all your sessions and activities clear so that learners understand the "why" behind the "what." Using current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can be helpful here as well, to point out when specifically, a learner might need specific knowledge or skills.
- **Experience:** Adults – particularly older adults – have a lot to share! They learn best when they have opportunities to share their wisdom. This has other benefits too, of course, in that it allows other learners to gain that knowledge. Though your learners may be new to being AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers or a particular topic, chances are that they have some experience with something similar – working with children informally, perhaps working in teams with other older adults, or maybe just relevant life experiences. Practically, this means asking almost as many questions of your learners as they ask of you! Encourage them to share with each other in small groups and in a large group setting, and explicitly acknowledge the expertise they bring to a conversation.
- **Application:** Adults learn best by practicing what they have learned. Incorporating activities allows learners to apply knowledge themselves and make connections to real-world situations. Practically, this means offering frequent opportunities for learners to interact with material. Consider including role-playing activities or asking participants how they would react to specific scenarios. Many trainers use a "Learn, Do, Teach" framework, where they explain a concept, have learners apply the concept, and then ask the learners to try to explain the concept to someone else, such as a peer. This principle also means that learning often

continues after a formal “training,” when your learners go out into the real world. Consider including time for reflection regularly to reinforce new ideas and concepts.

- **Repetition:** Adults don’t remember everything they’re told the first time. This is just human nature – in any training, expect your learners to only remember a small portion of the information you share exactly. Practically, this means not only that you should repeat key concepts within a training, but also that you should give learners tools to remind themselves. Referencing handbooks and other tools that learners have after the fact is a great practice for adult learning. Also consider explicitly pointing out the 2-3 most important pieces of information in a session by saying something like, “If you remember nothing else from the past hour, remember...” Reviewing information both at the end of a session and in later follow up activities also helps learners retain more.

There are many resources available online if you would like to learn more about adult learning. The Northwest Center for Public Health Practice has created a very helpful [Adult Learning Toolkit](#) that is useful for many topics beyond public health. [Facilitating Adult Learning](#) by Dr. Lela Vandenberg offers lots of great practical tips as well.

## **8.7 SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program regulations on service requirements (called “terms of service” in the regulations) are found in [45 CFR 2552.51 through 2552.53](#).

### **8.7.1 Weekly Hours Requirement**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week. An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs ([45 CFR 2552.51](#)).

The sponsor should develop a variety of volunteer stations that afford opportunities for year-round placements, nine-month placements, summer placements, and various weekly scheduling requirements. See the box below for suggestions on managing service during the summer, when there may be fewer service opportunities available.

In addition, sponsors may choose to abide by either the hourly or annual minimums. A sponsor must also document how it chooses to meet the requirement above in local policies that define hours of service for volunteers and the sponsor must implement its policies consistently.

### **8.7.2 Travel Time, Mealtimes, Training, Official Meetings, Recognition**

Travel time between the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer’s home and place of assignment may not be considered part of the service schedule and is not stipended. Travel time between individual assignments is part of the service schedule. Mealtimes may be part of the service schedule and is stipended. Additionally, attendance at pre-service orientation, in-service training, AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council meetings, physicals (if applicable), and recognition events are also considered official project activities or events. Hours served in support of these activities or events count toward the minimum and maximum service requirements and volunteers should receive stipends for them, consistent with sponsor policies and procedures.

### **8.7.3 Sponsor Service Policies**

Service policies must be provided in writing to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. These policies should include, but are not limited to, probationary periods, criminal history checks, resignations, annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, prohibited activity, meal and travel reimbursements, and appeal procedures. The policies should also cover the volunteer's annual performance appraisal and annual income review.

Sponsors should set policies that define leave in accordance with all applicable regulations. When developing leave policies, sponsors should consider applicable rules and regulations that may impact volunteer management, like the hours-of-service requirement, criminal history check requirements, etc.

### **8.7.4 Volunteer Separation**

A sponsor may separate a volunteer for cause, including but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments, or having income in excess of the eligibility level. Separation should not occur until the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is given an opportunity to file a grievance and/or appeal the action in accordance with the sponsor's service policy ([45 CFR 2552.53](#)).

#### **AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers Serving over the Summer**

The term of service requirement stating that volunteers shall serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week, is defined in regulation at [45 CFR 2552.51](#). Sponsors that partner extensively with schools that observe a traditional 9 to 10 month school year may find this requirement challenging during the summer when school is not in session. For volunteers who wish to continue service during the summer, sponsors may use a combination of activities to meet this requirement, such as:

- Placements at summer enrichment activities, such as remedial academic programs or day camps
- In-service training: Sponsors may choose to increase hours dedicated to in-service training when opportunities for placement are limited. See Section 8.6 for more information.
- Stipended leave, in line with reasonable sponsor policies and procedures
- Leaves of absence or unpaid leave, again guided by reasonable sponsor policies and procedures. Effective policies and procedures take into account AmeriCorps's requirements regarding breaks of service as they relate to criminal history checks. (See [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#)).

## **8.8 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN MANAGING AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS**

### **I. Effective Practices to Ensure Satisfaction among AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers in Their Service to the Community**

The project builds a spirit of commitment among the volunteers by:

- A. Ensuring that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have opportunities to express their concerns, interests, and observations about the project to the staff of the project and the volunteer station;
- B. Involving AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the operation and appraisal of assignments and project operations;
- C. Soliciting comments and/or recommendations from the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers related to their experiences in serving children, and incorporating relevant information into the project as applicable;
- D. Adopting specific strategies to retain a diverse group of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; and
- E. Identifying and promptly addressing any issues or problems that impact the retention of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds.

## **II. Effective Practices to Help AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers Develop Their Capacity to be Community Leaders and Spokespersons**

The project:

- A. Encourages the volunteers to recognize and take pride in the value of their service to the community;
- B. Provides AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers opportunities to serve in leadership roles and develop leadership skills that enhance their personal lives and the project, such as serving on the Community Advisory Group;
- C. Provides opportunities for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to facilitate training with other AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers using a standard training format with learning objectives as ways to measure progress;
- D. Involves AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in promoting the project to the community, such as through media appearances; and
- E. Acknowledges and values the strengths and skills of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers through ensuring that assignments are challenging and match the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' interests and abilities.

## **III. Effective Practices for Acknowledging the Contributions of AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

The sponsor and project director:

- A. Plan and implement individual and group recognition activities;
- B. Ensure that volunteer stations regularly recognize AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers as contributors to the stations' ability to deliver services;
- C. Provide at least one annual recognition event for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers which has significant community support and involvement;
- D. Recognize, document, and publicize outstanding volunteers in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP achievement;
- E. Consider collaborating with other area AmeriCorps Seniors programs on recognition efforts; and
- F. Consider non-traditional forms of recognition, especially for culturally diverse and Boomer volunteers.

## **9 AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS**

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AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are provided with cost reimbursements and other benefits. Within the limits of a project's approved budget, and in accordance with [45 CFR 2552.43](#) and any written AmeriCorps Seniors policy guidance to projects, volunteers are provided transportation, meals, accident and liability insurance, physical exam (if applicable), uniforms when appropriate, and recognition activities. Cost reimbursements are budgeted as "Volunteer Expenses," and the two terms may be used interchangeably.

### **9.1 ADMINISTRATION OF COST REIMBURSEMENTS**

Sponsors should establish written cost reimbursement policies and procedures and provide these to each volunteer. Orientations and in-service trainings are ideal times to provide these to volunteers and discuss them. The amount of reimbursement for non-stipend cost reimbursements made to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is determined by the availability of funds and project's written policy regarding reimbursement of volunteer expenses.

#### **9.1.1 Assignment-Related Expenses**

Project funds may be used to reimburse volunteers for expenses, including transportation costs, incurred while performing their volunteer assignments, provided that these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award ([45 CFR 2552.46](#)). Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.

#### **9.1.2 Income Disregard Memo**

Cost reimbursements are not subject to any tax or charge or treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, workers' compensation, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws ([45 CFR 2551.47](#)). In the event a volunteer is seeking eligibility towards, or currently receiving, assistance or services under any governmental program, whether local, state, or federal, any payments or reimbursements made to volunteers under the AmeriCorps Seniors program are to be disregarded as income. See [Guidance from the Office of General Counsel - Income Disregard](#) for a memo discussing the provision of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 that requires, in most cases, government agencies to disregard payments to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers when determining their eligibility for assistance and benefits. Please note that this memo does not need be updated annually and that, once signed, it is effective unless revoked or superseded. This document was most recently updated in 2023.

#### **9.1.3 Reimbursement Policies**

The amount of reimbursement made to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is determined by the availability of funds and project's written policy regarding reimbursement of Volunteer Expenses. The procedure and the limits for volunteers to request reimbursement should be identified in volunteer orientation sessions and project service policies.

#### **9.1.4 Non-Reimbursed Volunteer Expenses**

Volunteer Expense items, including transportation to and from their assignments, meals taken during assignments, recognition activities, and recognition items, which are purchased at the volunteers'

own expense and not reimbursed by the project to the volunteer, are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget.

### **9.1.5 Non-AmeriCorps Funded AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers whose stipends are funded with non-AmeriCorps Seniors resources are entitled to all benefits to which AmeriCorps Seniors-funded AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are entitled ([45 CFR 2552.102](#)).

### **9.1.6 Non-Stipended AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

Sponsors must provide non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with all of the cost reimbursements, except for the stipend, that stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers receive, as they should be treated equally ([45 CFR 2552.102\(c\)](#)). However, statute prevents federal funding or non-federal match from being used to support non-stipended volunteer cost reimbursements such as meals, transportation, and physical examinations (if applicable) (42 U.S.C. 5011(4)). Sponsors should budget locally generated contributions that exceed the required non-federal match in their budget's excess column to pay for non-stipended volunteers' cost reimbursements (42 U.S.C. 5011(4)). If sponsors need more guidance on budgeting for non-stipended volunteers, they should contact their portfolio manager.

## **9.2 VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS DETAILED**

### **9.2.1 Stipend**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve from 5 to 40 hours a week. The stipend is a payment to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to enable them to serve without cost to themselves ([45 CFR 2552.12\(v\)](#)).

The stipend is paid for the hourly service schedule that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers spend with assigned children, for earned leave if applicable, and for attendance at official project events, such as, orientation, in-service training, Advisory Council meetings (as members or official observers), physicals (if applicable), recognition events, and travel time between individual assignments. Travel time between the volunteer's home and place of assignment may not be considered as part of the service schedule and is not stipended. However, travel time between assignments is a part of the service schedule. Mealtime may be part of the service schedule and is stipended (See [45 CFR 2552.46](#) and [45 CFR 2552.52](#)).

### **9.2.2 Transportation**

#### **9.2.2.1 General Principles and Practices**

- 1) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may receive assistance with the cost of transportation to and from volunteer assignments and official project activities, including orientation, training, physicals, and recognition events ([45 CFR 2552.46](#)).
- 2) It is suggested that the project work with its advisory council to prepare a transportation plan. Such a plan should be sound and reasonable, based on lowest-cost transportation modes, and include scheduling, modes of transportation, criteria for reimbursement, mileage rates, and patterns of transportation.

- 3) Consideration should be given to volunteers who do not own cars or may prefer not to drive and can only participate in the program when other arrangements and modes of transportation are developed.
- 4) Transportation should be considered when deciding where volunteers are assigned. Convenient and less costly transportation is promoted when assignments are developed in areas close to where AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers live.
- 5) It is important to consider both costs and convenience, as well as volunteer service schedules, in developing a cost-effective travel solution.
- 6) Transportation provided by volunteers that has not been reimbursed to the volunteer cannot be used as a local contribution to the project budget.
- 7) Parking fees for volunteers having to park at a volunteer station or at an official AmeriCorps Seniors FGP function may be budgeted. Parking costs are allowable as a local in-kind contribution only if they are normally charged.
- 8) AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that transportation costs to be reimbursed to the volunteer were in conjunction with volunteer service and to provide details of the reimbursement. Vouchers are subject to review for compliance monitoring and AmeriCorps Seniors audit purposes.
- 9) Projects may incorporate volunteer expense claims on the timesheet form. Costs must be verified by signatures of the volunteer, the volunteer station supervisor, and designated AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff. (See [Appendix C.3](#) for a sample Volunteer Timesheet and Mileage Request form.)

### **9.2.2.2 Reimbursement for Volunteers' Transportation**

#### Volunteer Drivers

- 1) Reimbursement of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who drive their own cars is based on a cost-per-mile rate set by the sponsor via written policy. Volunteers are reimbursed for actual mileage within the limits of available funds and local project reimbursement policy. Volunteers cannot be reimbursed in excess of actual costs, or on a per capita basis, for transporting other volunteers. (See [Appendix C.3](#) for a sample Volunteer Timesheet and Mileage Request form.)
- 2) Mileage reimbursement directly to a volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP from a volunteer station for transportation from the volunteer's home to the place of assignment and return home is acceptable as local support of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project. Project files should include verification of this contribution for review for compliance monitoring and AmeriCorps Seniors audit purposes.
- 3) Mileage reimbursement to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers from volunteer stations for providing transportation while on volunteer assignments cannot be used as local support of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project. AmeriCorps Seniors FGP cannot accept responsibility for the costs of community service provided by volunteer stations and, therefore, cannot be credited for the value of those costs to be used as local budget support.



### Carpool Drivers

Drivers of carpools receive reimbursement for actual mileage based on a cost-per-mile rate. Passengers do not receive reimbursement.

### Public Transportation Users

Sponsors should establish procedures, such as a voucher system, for reimbursing volunteers for public transportation expenses, including subways, buses, and other public conveyances. Reimbursements must be based on documentation by the volunteer of actual costs incurred for project-related transportation expenses.

### Certification and Documentation

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that transportation costs to be reimbursed to the volunteer were in conjunction with volunteer service and to provide details of the reimbursement. Projects may incorporate volunteer expense claims on the timesheet form. Costs must be verified by signatures of the volunteer, the volunteer station supervisor, and designated AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff. Vouchers are subject to audit. (See [Appendix C.3](#) for a sample timesheet that incorporates hours of service, mileage, and meal expenses).

### Other Transportation Reimbursement Considerations

- 1) The purchase cost, operation, and maintenance of vans, mini-buses, or station wagons may be budgeted only if they provide the most flexible and economical transportation available.
- 2) Project vehicle costs, vehicle driver's salary and fringe benefits, and vehicle insurance are budgeted as travel costs under volunteer expenses in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project grant application.
- 3) Contracted transportation, if it is the most flexible and economical mode, may be budgeted for volunteers.
- 4) Volunteers who do not incur travel expenses (e.g., those who walk to assignments, ride on free public transportation, or are passengers in carpools) do not receive reimbursement.

### **9.2.3 Meals**

Within the limits of available resources and project written policy, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers receive assistance with the cost of meals taken during their service schedule ([\[45 CFR 2552.46\(d\)\]](#)). Project staff arrange for or assist with the cost of meals for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers during orientation and training, and, as feasible, on days when volunteer service is provided.

Project directors should make special efforts to reach an understanding with volunteer stations to provide meals for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. In general, these meals may be used as local support in the budget, provided there is sufficient documentation.

### **In-Home Meal Options**

Meal arrangements become more difficult for volunteers with in-home assignments. Volunteers who plan to eat between assignments may be far removed from nutrition centers and volunteer stations which have meal facilities. Some options are for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to share a meal with a client, bring their own “brown bag” lunch, or eat at a restaurant and be reimbursed for the cost of their meal. Meals provided by or to clients served are not an allowable budget cost.

### **Title III of the Older Americans Act**

Local congregate nutrition programs, funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act, operate in some public and private non-profit organizations. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers over 60 are eligible for meals at congregate meal sites funded under this program. See Paragraph (5) (b) in [Section 10.3.2 of this Handbook](#) for more information on when programs funded by a federal agency other than AmeriCorps may be included in a grant’s non-federal share.

### **Reimbursement to Volunteers**

The amount of reimbursement to volunteers for meals is normally based on actual expenses, consistent with costing procedures developed by the sponsor rather than a flat daily rate. However, reimbursement of “brown-bag” lunches prepared by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may be based on a flat rate established by the sponsor in written policy. The basis for the rate should be included in the grant application budget narrative. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that meals to be reimbursed to the volunteer were taken in conjunction with volunteer service and provide details of the reimbursement. Vouchers must be approved by AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff, and they are subject to review for compliance monitoring and AmeriCorps audit purposes. (See [Appendix C.3](#) for sample forms for volunteers to use to request reimbursement for meals.)

### **9.2.4 Insurance**

The program regulations require AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers be provided with accident insurance, personal liability insurance, and excess automobile liability insurance [[45 CFR 2552.46\(b\)](#)]. The minimum levels of this insurance are specified by AmeriCorps Seniors and may be subject to change from time to time. See [Appendix A.10: AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Requirements](#) for minimum coverage levels.

The insurance coverage must be in excess of and noncontributing to any other valid and collectible insurance the volunteers have. In other words, the accident and excess automobile liability coverage are intended to provide higher levels of insurance for volunteers, starting where other insurance coverage for them stops. The AmeriCorps Seniors-required insurance is excess insurance not primary insurance. This is also true for personal liability; but volunteers are often not covered by personal liability insurance, in which case the AmeriCorps Seniors-required personal liability insurance shall become primary insurance with no deductible conferred to or paid by volunteers.

### **1) Accident Insurance**

Accident insurance covers AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their volunteer service, during meal periods while serving as a volunteer, and while attending project-sponsored activities, such as recognition activities, orientation, and AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council meetings.

Protection shall be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer from other sources, such as health insurance coverage.

### **2) Personal Liability Insurance for Volunteers**

Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. Such protection does not include professional liability coverage. The sponsor must provide third-party protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of their volunteer service activities. Some insurance providers refer to this as “volunteer liability insurance.” For each sponsoring organization, the amount of protection must meet or exceed the minimum levels of this insurance as specified by AmeriCorps Seniors. See [Appendix A.10: AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Requirements](#) for minimum coverage levels.

### **3) Excess Automobile Liability Insurance**

To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by the volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP's personal vehicle insurance and liability claims in excess of that coverage, the sponsor must provide Excess Automobile Liability Insurance coverage for bodily injury and/or property damage. See [Appendix A.10: AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Requirements](#) for minimum coverage levels.

NOTE: It is recommended that projects verify that volunteer drivers have valid licenses and basic liability insurance.

### **4) Liability Insurance on Personal Vehicles of Volunteers**

Automobile liability insurance is a volunteer's personal expense and is not reimbursable to the volunteer by the project. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who use their personal vehicles to drive in connection with project-related activities must keep their automobile liability insurance in effect for their own protection.

The volunteer's personal vehicle liability insurance must equal or exceed the limits of the state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law in their state.

#### **9.2.5 Physical Examination**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may be provided a physical examination or assistance with the cost of a physical examination prior to assignment and periodically thereafter if sponsors elect to provide

#### **Volunteers and Workers Compensation**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers *are not* employees and *are not* covered by Federal or state workers compensation insurance.

[45 CFR 2552.45](#)

#### **Personal Liability vs. Professional Malpractice Insurance**

Personal liability insurance does not include, nor is it a substitute for, malpractice insurance which some volunteer stations need for their professional staff and for some volunteers who assist professionals or serve in professional capacities.

this benefit. While a physical examination is not required and may not be determinative of a volunteer's ability to serve, it is an allowable grant expense ([45 CFR 2552.46\(f\)](#)) (See [Appendix C.12](#) for sample physical form).

- 1) If physical examinations are provided as a benefit for volunteers, documentation of the exams must also be retained by the sponsor. The documentation must be maintained until at least three years from the date a sponsor submits the final FFR for the project period when the volunteer exits service or three years past the last audit, whichever is later. See [Chapter 11 on Reports and Recordkeeping](#) for more information.
- 2) Project staff **may** negotiate with volunteer stations, local health units, public health departments, or private physicians to provide physical examinations to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers as non-Federal, in-kind project support. It **may** be explained that AmeriCorps Seniors allows such annual examinations as a benefit to the volunteers in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP.

### **9.2.6 Uniforms or Smocks**

When volunteer stations require AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to wear special uniforms or smocks, the cost of uniforms and laundering are an allowable project cost when these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station, sufficient funds are available to cover these expenses, and all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award are met. Otherwise, volunteer stations are responsible for such costs.

### **9.2.7 Clothing and Branded Gear**

Many AmeriCorps Seniors grantees want to use clothing to highlight the volunteers' participation in the AmeriCorps Seniors program. Items like clothing, bags, hats, or other gear with the AmeriCorps Seniors program names and logos that are not required by the project or volunteer station are considered recognition of service and should be categorized in the recognition budget line item rather than the uniform line item.

### **9.2.8 Recognition**

Appropriate recognition for service is to be provided for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers ([45 CFR 2552.46](#)). Recognition covers a wide range of potential costs; any costs charged to this direct benefit to the volunteer must be in accordance with the applicable OMB cost principles and using sound business practices. Any costs charged to recognition should be reasonable and prudent, properly valued, and consistent with the sponsoring organizational accounting practices. Consideration should also be given to the appropriateness of the expenditure (See [Appendix A.1](#) for Guidance for Recognition Costs).

- 1) At least annually the sponsor plans and arranges for recognition of volunteers for their service to the community. Recognition often includes large, formal annual events. It may also include informal recognition methods throughout the year. Sponsors may also recognize local individuals and agencies or organizations for significant activities that support project goals.
- 2) AmeriCorps does not supply volunteer recognition materials, nor does it require specific recognition materials.

- 3) Informal recognition ought to be ongoing, such as listening to and acting upon recommendations by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, offering honest praise, and providing assignments that are increasingly satisfying.
- 4) Recognition events may consist of special ceremonies, teas, breakfasts, luncheons, and recreational outings at which pins and certificates for stipulated terms of service are awarded.
- 5) The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council and volunteer stations are expected to participate in recognition activities. Community contributions in support of recognition activities can enhance the quality of the events. Contributions need not be monetary. Donated space, food, decorations, and transportation should be encouraged. Proper documentation is required to use donations as local support.
- 6) To emphasize the importance of the occasion, AmeriCorps regional, and headquarters staff, as well as city and county officials and officers of local organizations may be invited to recognition events.
- 7) Entertainment expenses (e.g. bands, alcohol) are unallowable expenses and cannot be charged to the federal or non-federal share of the budget.

### **9.3 LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

Legal counsel may be retained, and counsel fees, court costs, bail, and other expenses incidental to the defense of a volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP may be paid, in a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding when such a proceeding arises directly out of performance of the volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP activities. [45 CFR Part 1220](#) sets forth the circumstances under which AmeriCorps Seniors may reimburse for such expenses. Consult the AmeriCorps portfolio manager for guidance.

## 10 GRANTS MANAGEMENT

### 10.1 INTRODUCTION TO GRANTS MANAGEMENT

#### 10.1.1 Basic Requirements

Sponsors must manage grants awarded to them in accordance with all applicable AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations \(45 CFR 2552\)](#), the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) as well as the [Terms and Conditions](#) for AmeriCorps grants. Contact the appropriate portfolio manager for additional technical assistance on fiscal management of an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grant.

#### Financial Management Training

An on-line course, “Key Concepts of Financial Management,” [which can be accessed on Litmos here](#), provides a basic introduction to grants management considerations applicable to all AmeriCorps grantees.

Topic	Purpose	For all NFE (Non-federal entities)
<a href="#">Uniform Administrative Requirements</a>	Standards of consistency and uniformity of grants to various institutions	<a href="#">2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.300 to 200.345</a>
<a href="#">Cost Principles</a>	Principles for determining the costs of grants and other agreements with non-profit organizations	<a href="#">2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.400 to 200.475</a>
<a href="#">Audits</a>	Standards for obtaining consistency and uniformity among Federal agencies for the audits of states, local governments, and non-profit organizations expending Federal awards.	<a href="#">2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.500 – 200.520</a>

In accordance with [Uniform Administrative Requirements, 2 CFR 200.302](#), Non-Federal Entities (NFE) that receive AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grant funds are required have financial management systems that provide for the following:

- Identification, in its accounts, of all federal awards received and expended and the federal programs under which they were received.
- Accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of each federal award or program in accordance with the reporting requirements set forth in [2 CFR 200.327 - Financial reporting](#) and [2 CFR 200.328 - Monitoring and reporting program performance](#).
- Records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for federally funded activities
- Effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets.
- Comparison of expenditures with budget amounts for each federal award.

- Written procedures to implement the requirements of 2 CFR 200.305 - Payment.
- Written procedures for determining the allowability of costs in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles and the terms and conditions of the federal award](#).

### **10.1.2 Cost Control and Budget Monitoring**

Project support provided under an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grant must be furnished at the lowest possible cost consistent with the project's effective operation of the project as described in the AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations](#). ([45 CFR 2552.93\(b\)](#)). Project directors should work with the sponsor's fiscal staff and regularly compare the budget to actual costs.

#### **Terminology Note**

A "Grant" is an award of financial assistance that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6304, is used to enter a relationship. (2 CFR 182.650)

### **10.1.3 Budgeting Costs**

Project costs for which grant funds are budgeted must be reasonable and justified as being essential to project operation. "Grant funds" refers to both the AmeriCorps Seniors share and the required non-federal share of the grant.

- 1) Specific costs are either allowable or unallowable. Only allowable costs may be included in the AmeriCorps Seniors share or the grantee share of the budget. Only amounts approved by AmeriCorps Seniors may be expended.
- 2) Notices of Grant Award, as well as the FGP Program Regulations ([45 CFR 2552.93](#)), incorporate the OMB "[OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements](#)" found at 2 CFR Chapter I, and OMB "[OMB Cost Principles](#)" found at [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E](#). Notices of Grant Award, as well as the FGP Program Regulations ([45 CFR 2552.93](#)), incorporate the OMB "[OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements](#)" found at 2 CFR Chapter I, and OMB "[OMB Cost Principles](#)" found at [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E](#). OMB Cost Principles distinguish between costs that are allowable and costs that are not allowable for all federal grants. Grantees should review 2 CFR Chapters I and II and refer to specific regulations within 2 CFR Chapters I and II as needed. OMB Cost Principles apply to funds included in the grant as part of the AmeriCorps Seniors share and also apply to the required non-federal share. Conversely, the OMB Cost Principles do not apply to funds that are not included in the grant as part of the AmeriCorps Seniors share or are not included in the required non-federal share. Also, the OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements, does not apply to funds budgeted as Excess non-federal or to other sponsor resources outside the grant. Therefore, it is recommended that all allowable costs be budgeted in the "AmeriCorps Seniors Share" or "Non-AmeriCorps Seniors" share of the budget.
- 3) Additional requirements in the AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations](#) also determine cost allowability. Below are listed several cost items about which questions commonly are raised. Questions regarding costs not included in the listing below should be referred to the appropriate portfolio manager.

#### **Terminology Note**

In the electronic grants system, "grantee share" and "applicant share," are used to refer to the required non-federal share of the grant.

"Local share," as used in the program regulations, also refers to the required non-federal share.

- a) Equipment or supplies for volunteers on assignment are not allowable, unless these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award ([45 CFR 2552.46\(f\)](#)).
- b) The following insurance costs are not allowable:
  - 1. Public liability insurance for sponsors (except for space that the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP sponsor occupies that is separate from the main sponsor offices).
  - 2. Primary insurance for volunteers' or project staff's personal vehicles.
  - 3. Health insurance for volunteers.
- c) Costs for recruitment of personnel and volunteers for the award are allowable, including costs of recruiting hard-to-reach volunteers, such as those belonging to ethnic groups that may not be reachable by standard methods of recruitment.
- d) Only compensation paid to staff who are engaged in activities that directly support the performance of the award is allowable. Sponsors should familiarize themselves with proper documentation requirements in accordance with the OMB Cost Principles ([2 CFR § 200.430 "Compensation – personal services"](#)).
- e) When project staff are employed in the operation of two or more AmeriCorps Seniors projects, in order to be allowable, their salaries and fringe benefits must be budgeted on a prorated basis in each project's budget, based on the allocation of time to each project. Grantees must document actual time spent on each grant, and only actual time should be reported.
- f) The costs of National Service Criminal History Checks on AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers or prospective AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are allowable. However, wherever possible, these costs should be paid by volunteer stations. When paid by the project, such costs should be budgeted as Volunteer Support Expenses because these costs are program operating expenses.
- g) Costs of membership in the AmeriCorps Seniors or other professional associations are allowable. However, the membership must be attached to the organization (not an individual). An individual can be named on the membership but if the individual leaves, the membership stays with the organization. Additionally, federal/match funds may not be used for a membership to a lobbying organization. If the association/ organization has a lobbying arm, grantees will need to ensure that their membership dues are not used for lobbying purposes ([2 CFR 200.454](#)).

#### **10.1.4 Direct and Indirect Costs**

##### **1) Definitions**

Direct costs are costs that are readily associated with a particular budget line item. Indirect costs are costs incurred by an organization that are not readily identifiable with a specific award, project, or program, but are necessary to operate the organization and its programs. Indirect costs may also be referred to as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs. Typical examples of indirect costs include depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and



maintaining facilities, and general administration and expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, administrative personnel, and accounting.

2) Cognizant Federal Agency

A “cognizant federal agency” is an agency appointed by the Office of Management and Budget that is responsible for negotiating and approving the indirect cost rates of a grantee on behalf of all federal agencies. Typically, the “cognizant” agency is the federal agency from which a grantee receives the majority of its federal support in the form of Direct Grants. When an organization that has no cognizant federal agency proposes indirect costs in a grant application, AmeriCorps may assume the role of providing oversight.

3) Process for Establishing an Indirect Cost Rate

When a grantee does not already have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (sometimes called a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or NICRA) may request one. The grantee may contact [IndirectCostRate@cns.gov](mailto:IndirectCostRate@cns.gov) to initiate this process. Indirect Cost Rate team will confirm AmeriCorps’s status as the cognizant agency for indirect costs and initiate the rate negotiation process.

4) De Minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Costs

Any non-Federal entity doesn’t have a current negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in [2 CFR Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals](#), paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. Please contact your grants official for more information.

## **10.2 ROLE OF THE AMERICORPS OFFICE OF GRANT ADMINISTRATION**

The acceptance of an assistance award from AmeriCorps creates a legal duty on the part of the grantee to use the available funds or resources in accordance with the terms and conditions of the assistance agreement. An obligation exists on behalf of AmeriCorps to fund the grantee in accordance with the assistance award.

The Portfolio Manager for a given grant partners with AmeriCorps's Grants Management staff based at the Office of Grant Administration (OGA). The Portfolio Manager is the representative of AmeriCorps Seniors in financial, budgetary, and administrative matters of AmeriCorps Seniors. The Portfolio Manager has overall responsibility for the receipt, approval and monitoring of all required financial documents from AmeriCorps Seniors grant programs. Only the Portfolio Manager, acting as the agent of the federal government, has the authority to:

- Award a grant.
- Modify the terms of a grant.
- Issue written instructions to the grantee to start or stop work.
- Execute any action which will result in increasing or decreasing the cost to the government.
- Extend or curtail the budget or project period cited in the applicable Notice of Grant Award (NGA).
- In conjunction with the OGA Director, or his/her designee, propose Management Decisions upon completion of an audit.
- Close-out a grant.

The Portfolio Manager is ultimately responsible for determining the allowability and reasonableness of grant costs proposed or incurred, except in certain circumstances related to the resolution of audit findings. The Portfolio Manager named in the NGA is the representative of the Grant Official for the purpose of monitoring the programmatic performance of the grant and advises OGA on all activities that may adversely affect performance. The OGA may accompany and work with the portfolio manager to conduct financial monitoring of the grant. However, grantees should first consult with the portfolio manager prior to seeking approvals where the OGA has the ultimate approval authority.

*Grantees in states that are covered by new AmeriCorps Regional Offices, should contact their Portfolio Managers for financial, budgetary, and administrative matters.*

## **10.3 BUDGET MANAGEMENT**

### **10.3.1 Budget Categories**

- 1) Costs are separated according to whether the proposed source of project support is federal or non-federal. In context of the budget, “federal” means “AmeriCorps Seniors,” and “non-federal” means “sources other than AmeriCorps Seniors” including certain other federal agencies, as authorized by law or by the source of funds.
  - a) “Required non-federal.” (Also known as “Grantee Share” on the budget). This is the part of the total non-federal budget used to meet the non-federal share requirement. Any additional amount that the grantee wants to include as part of the required non-federal share of the total project cost should also be under this category. Costs included under this category must meet all the cost requirements established by AmeriCorps Seniors. See the next page for more information on the required non-federal share of the budget.
  - b) “Excess non-federal.” This is the part of the total non-federal budget that is in excess of the non-federal share requirement. This is distinguished from the Excess Column on the budget. The two terms are not synonymous. The “Excess non-federal” is defined as funds over the required share budgeted in the “Grantee Share” column of the budget. Inclusion of excess non-federal costs is not required. If excess non-federal funds are budgeted, they must support the purpose of the project, consistent with the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. It is generally recommended that as long as costs are allowable, sponsors should budget those costs as part of the required non-federal share so they can be easily reported on the project’s Federal Financial Report.
- 2) Allowable costs separated by source are further differentiated by purpose, that is, whether the funds are to cover costs of Volunteer Expenses or Volunteer Support Expenses.
  - a) Section I. Volunteer Support Expenses: This section includes all allowable costs that are needed to administer (support) the volunteer project including the following line items:
    - A. Project Personnel Expenses
    - B. Personal Fringe Benefits
    - C. Project Staff Travel
    - D. Equipment
    - E. Supplies
    - F. Contractual and Consultant Services

I. Other Volunteer Support Costs

- a) Criminal History Background Checks

J. Indirect Costs

- b) Section II. Volunteer Expenses: This section is a limited category which includes allowable expenses that directly benefit the volunteers:

A. Stipends

B. Other Volunteer Costs

- Volunteer Travel
- Meals
- Insurance
- Physical examinations
- Recognition Items and Activities
- Uniforms

**Terminology Note**

In the context of AmeriCorps Seniors project budgeting, the term “Volunteer Expenses” is sometimes referred to as “cost reimbursements” or “Volunteer Benefits.”

**10.3.2 Budget Criteria**

- 1) The FGP sponsor is expected to supplement the AmeriCorps Seniors grant with other budget support. The sponsor must raise the amount of non-federal support described in the project funding requirements located in FGP Program Regulations [45 CFR 2552.92\(e\)](#).

- 2) An AmeriCorps Seniors grant may be awarded for up to 90 percent of the cost of development and operation of an AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program project. The sponsor is required to contribute at least 10 percent of the total project cost.

- a. Project support from non-AmeriCorps Seniors sources may be in cash or in-kind contributions.
- b. AmeriCorps Seniors-approved in-kind contributions may constitute part or all of the non-federal share requirement. Requirements for in-kind contributions are found in [2 CFR Chapter II Subpart D Section 200.306](#).
- c. AmeriCorps Seniors may allow exceptions to the non-Federal share requirement (at least 10 percent of the total project cost) in cases of demonstrated need such as:

- i. Initial difficulties in the development of local funding sources during the first three years of operations; **or**

- Documentation that non-AmeriCorps funding requests were denied during the three-year grant period (Applicants will be able to submit

**Calculating the Required Non-Federal Share**

The required non-federal share for the Foster Grandparent Program is 10% of the total project cost, excluding costs budgeted in the excess column.

Use this formula to determine the required non-federal share for your award:

**Required Non-Federal Share =**  
**(Federal Share / 0.9) – Federal Share**

For example, a sponsor that receives a federal share of \$180,000 would calculate their required non-federal share like this:

**Required Non-Federal Share =**  
**(\$180,000 / 0.9) - \$180,000 = \$20,000**

letters or denial or other independent documentation that requests were not approved or are not likely to be approved).

- ii. An economic downturn, the occurrence of a natural disaster, or similar events in the service area that severely restrict or reduce sources of local funding support; **or**
    - Documentation that any of the above impacted applicants' ability to secure non-AmeriCorps funds.
  - iii. The unexpected discontinuation of local support from one or more sources that a project has relied on for a period of years.
    - Documentation that prior match providers will not provide match.
- 3) A sponsor proposing to contribute less than the required non-Federal share must provide AmeriCorps Seniors with an acceptable written justification for the lower level of support. The justification is submitted for consideration through the portfolio manager. The justification for the waiver should:
- a. be requested prior to the grant award;
  - b. include the grant period the waiver requested for (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> year all years) and;
  - c. detail how much of the match needs to be waived (e.g., 5% or all of the match).
  - d. identify what activities on the grantee share would not happen if the waiver is granted.
- 4) All non-AmeriCorps Seniors funding expended for allowable costs will be counted as local support and as a contribution to the sponsor's local support with the following exceptions:
- a. Non-Federal support already committed to meet non-Federal share requirements of any other Federally assisted project or program may not be budgeted as part of the non-Federal support for FGP ([2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section 200.306](#)).
  - b. Funds from federal agencies other than AmeriCorps, including federally funded in-kind resources, may not be budgeted as part of the sponsor's local support contribution, except those funds specifically authorized by law ([2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section 200.306](#))
    - i. There are hundreds of Federal grant programs, each governed by laws and specific regulations and administered by many different departments and agencies. AmeriCorps is not able to provide a list of federal grant programs where funds are authorized by law to be applied to the non-federal share of AmeriCorps Seniors grants.
    - ii. It is the **grantee's** responsibility to document that another Federal program's funding is authorized by law to be used as non-federal share for other Federal grant programs.
    - iii. If you have questions concerning whether particular federal grant funds may be budgeted in the non-federal share, identify the source of the grant funds and contact the source of the funds for clarification. **Ask for the specific citation or document** that allows use of the funds in this way and maintain

that documentation as part of the grant file for reference. A verbal confirmation is generally not sufficient.

- c. Project costs for which the required non-federal funds are budgeted will be acceptable if: a) costs are allowable; b) are reasonable in comparison to other costs; c) benefit the project's operational effectiveness; and d) contribute to achievement of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program goals and objectives.
- d. AmeriCorps Seniors grant awards are made for a specified dollar amount, and if the sponsor obligates or expends AmeriCorps Seniors funds for costs that exceed the amount of the AmeriCorps Seniors award, the costs are not allowable.
- e. The number of individuals serving as AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may vary from time to time to accomplish the number of budgeted volunteer service years.
- f. Direct benefit items which are purchased at the volunteer's own expense and not reimbursed, are not allowable as contributions to the non-federal share of the budget.

### **10.3.3 Budget Non-Compliance**

#### **10.3.3.1 Required Non-Federal Share**

If a sponsor has failed to meet the statutorily required 10 percent non-federal share requirement, at the end of the project period the sponsor must take one of the two following actions:

- a) Reimburse AmeriCorps Seniors the full amount of the deficiency, ***but only if so directed by the Portfolio Manager.***
- b) Submit a written request for a waiver to the appropriate Portfolio Manager. This written request must be submitted with the final Federal Financial Report (FFR) and must include:
  1. Why the requirement was not met
  2. What specific attempts were made to achieve the required non-federal percentage
  3. A plan to provide the required non-federal share in the current grant period, assuming the sponsor has received a new award.

#### **10.3.3.2 Excess Resources**

Sponsors are not penalized for failure to achieve the budgeted amount of excess support unless it affects the volunteer cost reimbursements ratio or volunteer service years (VSYS). Failure to meet the total budget, including the excess amount, will be examined in light of the overall effect on the project's accomplishment of its goals and objectives.

### **10.3.4 Management of Volunteer Service Years (VSYS)**

An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer must serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week, and may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. This requirement gives project directors considerable flexibility in establishing service schedules that meet volunteer and volunteer station needs. At the same time, it highlights the importance of carefully managing volunteers to meet the project's budgeted VSYS.

#### **10.3.4.1 Counting AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

There are three distinct ways of grouping volunteers for purposes of counting and tracking them for budgetary purposes:

##### **A. Enrolled Volunteers**

This is the combined total of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers on both active and inactive volunteer status. The total includes all the federally funded volunteers and non-federally funded volunteer needed to meet the budgeted VSYS. The enrolled total is the figure best used to estimate the number of recognitions that must be budgeted annually.

##### **B. Active Volunteers**

This is the total of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers actually serving or who served within the pay period when the count is made. It includes volunteers normally on active service but temporarily on paid leave. The annual average active total, less the average number of persons on leave, is the figure used to estimate the number of volunteer meals, transportation costs, and insurance costs to be budgeted annually.

##### **C. Stipended Volunteers**

This is the total of active AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who will receive a stipend for services rendered during the pay period when the count is made. Volunteers who are normally active and stipended but who are temporarily on leave are counted as stipended. An annual average stipended total is used to estimate the amount of stipend funds to be budgeted annually.

#### **10.3.4.2 Volunteer Service Year**

- 1) AmeriCorps Seniors budget procedures use the following standards to express one full volunteer service year or VSYS:
  - a) 1,044 hours annually
  - b) 261 days annually (at 4 hours per day)
  - c) 52.2 weeks annually (at 20 hours per week)
- 2) The standardized stipend cost per VSYS is calculated by multiplying the number of hours in one VSYS by the current cost per hour for the stipend (1,044 hours x \$X.XX per hour). Please see current NOFA and eGrants for amount of annual stipend amount.
- 3) When managing VSYS related to budgetary projections and expenditures, one VSYS does not equal one volunteer unless each volunteer serves 1,044 hour per year. You will need to adjust the number of volunteers required to equal a VSYS, depending on the number of hours, between the minimum of 5 and maximum of 40, served weekly.
- 4) Volunteer hours should be reported on a cumulative basis in the Federal Financial Report (FFR) over the one-year budget year not the three-year project period. For example, Year 1 may yield 21,028 volunteer hours during the first FFR period, from January until June. From July until December, the second FFR period, 18,972 volunteer hours may be the total. The cumulative total over the Year 1 budget period would be 40,000 hours and that cumulative total is to be reported on the FFR. The beginning balances for Years 2 and 3 should be zero.

- 5) All of an individual's service time plus all stipended leave (as provided for in the sponsor's policies governing earned leave) cannot exceed, in the aggregate, 2080 hours annually. An individual AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer may serve up to 2080 hours, or two VSYS, in 12 months. Please review the Appendix C. 14 [AmeriCorps Seniors Guidance on Accrued Unused and Recognition Leave for FGP & SCP Volunteers](#) to ensure your policies reflect appropriate regulations.

#### **10.3.4.3 Management of Stipend Funds**

A sponsor agrees to generate a specific level of volunteer activity when a grant is awarded. This level of volunteer activity is calculated in terms of VSYS as described above and translated onto the budget to fund volunteer stipends.

**Full expenditure of stipend funds available should be the goal of budget management.** Sponsors submit an application with a plan to mobilize a targeted number of volunteers and reach a targeted number of beneficiaries. To achieve project goals, careful management of stipend expenditures, including leave, is key.

Sponsors should plan to recruit a sufficient number of volunteers to fully expend their budgeted stipends. Sponsors should not expect AmeriCorps Seniors to cover an over-expenditure of stipend funds. The VSYS calculator provided in [Appendix C.8](#) may help you manage VSYS and stipend expenditures throughout the year.

##### **A. Factors Influencing Expenditure of Stipend Funds**

Sponsors should strive to maintain a stable and consistent volunteer base. However, fluctuations in volunteer and recruitment numbers do occur. Sponsors should account and plan for the following in projecting their VSYS:

- 1) Volunteer attrition rates.
- 2) Extended leaves-of-absence.
- 3) Delays in orientation scheduling due to weather and resulting in placement delays.
- 4) Less than full time volunteer opportunities in educational settings.
- 5) Difficulties in recruiting eligible volunteers.

##### **B. Suggestions for Management of Stipend Funds through Management of Stipended Hours.**

Successful management of stipended hours and funds requires the development of quarterly or monthly projections that take into account sites that do not offer placements year-round, unstipended absences and attrition rates. (See [Appendix C.8](#) for a VSYS Calculator.)

- 1) Estimate Stipended and Unstipended Absences

Sponsors should estimate the effect volunteer absences will have on the actual total of hours stipended.

###### **i. Stipended Absences**

The sponsor's AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project policies relating to volunteer leave will be a guide for accurately estimating stipended absences. Reviewing

volunteer service schedules and interviewing individual volunteers will support accurate estimates as to when AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will take stipended leave. Please review the Appendix C.14 [AmeriCorps Seniors Guidance on Accrued Unused and Recognition Leave for FGP & SCP Volunteers](#) to ensure your policies reflect appropriate regulations.

AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grantees may grant administrative leave to their AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in those unusual and rare situations that prevent a volunteer, through no fault of their own, from serving at their volunteer station, as long as the grantee's program policies permit administrative leave in such situations. Grantees must define the specifics of administrative leave in their policies and procedures. AmeriCorps' approval is required to pay the stipend for administrative leave after the seventh calendar day of the extenuating circumstances that are the basis for the administrative leave. Request must be submitted in writing to the Portfolio Manager at AmeriCorps, documenting the request to extend the administrative leave past the 7th calendar day, with the project length of additional days and plans to resolve the barrier to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer getting back to service either at that station or another location/activity. See [Appendix A. 15 – FY 25 Final Rule](#) for processing requirements.

## ii. Unstipended Absences

Predictable unpaid absences may occur for individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers when, for example:

- a) There are school vacations for which the sponsor's leave policy allows no stipend for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's time off; or
- b) An individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer serves an assignment at a less than 12 months per year facility (a variety of institutional and school assignments may fit this pattern).
- c) Unpredictable unstipended absences may result, for example, from a volunteer's exceptionally lengthy illness or personal matters which require emergency attention, which exceed the allowances in the sponsor's leave policy.

## 2) Compare Planned Hours with Actual Hours

Stipend expenditures may be managed through careful monitoring of hours of service as follows:

### *Step #1*

Determine the total number of hours of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer service planned and budgeted. For example:

For a 60-VSY project, the stipend funds must be at most 60 multiplied by the current annual amount of the stipend, or \$166,020.

Find the number of hours funded by multiplying 60 VSYs times 1,044 (hours) for a total of 62,640 hours.



*Step #2*

Determine the number of hours budgeted per pay period:

Divide the total hours by the number of stipend pay periods annually. The total pay periods will be either 26.1 or 52.2 annually.

If there are 52.2 pay periods, then the total hours (62,640 in this example) divided by 52.2 equals 1,200 hours for which funding is provided each week.

*Step #3*

Monitor the actual running total of service time plus stipended leave.

Whenever the weekly total of service time plus stipended leave is below the 1,200 weekly allotment of hours, the sponsor has an excess in hours available for paying stipends. Whenever the running total is above the weekly allotment, the sponsor creates a deficit in hours. Reviews conducted each pay period will enable projections to be made as to the rate of expenditure, and cumulative expenditures, in terms of hours.

3) Estimate Annual Reserve of Stipendable Hours

With estimates in hand for hours of stipended and unstipended leave, the sponsor will be able to estimate from the beginning of the budget year whether there will be a net excess in hours funded over actual hours to be stipended based on projections of volunteer service. A net excess may be considered a reserve which the sponsor should plan to draw upon immediately. Adjustments in enrollment to fully utilize the estimated reserve should be made as early as possible in the budget period because these adjustments become increasingly impractical as the budget period progresses.

It is possible, allowable, and encouraged to have more individuals actually serving and stipended at a given time than there are VSYs budgeted, so long as there is an estimated reserve of volunteer service hours available within budget.

**10.3.5 Underachievement of Budgeted VSYs**

Sometimes a sponsor may find that it is unable to deliver the budgeted level of VSYs approved as part of the grant award. Whatever the cause of the shortfall, the community served by the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project is potentially deprived of services that could be provided by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Underachievement of VSYs also potentially deprives prospective volunteers of opportunities to serve. Further, the sponsor may be ineffectively executing its budget, and the resources dedicated to its grant may be more effectively utilized elsewhere.

**10.3.5.1 Budgetary options to remedy underachievement of VSYs**

Some options to remedy VSY underachievement are listed below. These options reflect budgetary actions that a sponsor or AmeriCorps Seniors may take to address VSY underachievement. The options do not detail programmatic strategies that may be exercised in concert with

modifications to the budget. Sponsors should work with their portfolio manager to develop and implement a full plan to address VSY under-expenditures as soon as a problem is identified.

If a sponsor wishes to take any of the budgetary actions presented below, the sponsor must send a request to their portfolio manager that explains:

- The cause of the shortfall
- Your efforts to address the shortfall
- Your plan to rebudget
- Your plan to meet or modify the number of volunteers the project expects to mobilize and the number of beneficiaries the project will serve.

For every \$6,500 in annual base federal funding they receive, grantees must continue to program at least one VSY in work plans that result in either National Performance Measure outcomes, or outputs related to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities (if they have historically supported such programming). This maximum cost per VSY is established in the Notice of Intent to Apply used when the grantee most recently renewed its three-year performance period. The sponsor must also comply with all other grant rules and regulations, match requirements, and performance measure requirements.

**The budgetary options available include:**

**A. Temporary or Permanent Request to *Rebudget***

A sponsor may request to rebudget the grant award so funding can be reallocated to other expenses that can reasonably be expected to reduce or eliminate the VSY shortfall. In some cases, the request may include funding allocated to VSYS in the stipend line item. Typically, rebudget requests involve increased recruitment and recognition efforts.

If a sponsor wishes to reduce the agreed-upon level of VSYS, it must request and receive written AmeriCorps Seniors approval to do so, in accordance with federal regulations at [45 CFR 2552.93\(f\)](#). These regulations control anticipated expenditures of and place limitations on the movement of stipend funding. A sponsor may request to temporarily or permanently reduce the grant's VSY level.

**B. Temporary or Permanent Request to *Return Grant Funding***

A sponsor may request to temporarily or permanently return funding from the grant.

A **temporary** return of grant funding is appropriate when, due to temporary and correctable circumstances, a sponsor anticipates falling short of its budgeted VSY level. A temporary return of grant funding allows a sponsor to request a reduction in funding for the current 12-month budget period. Assuming the cause of the shortfall is remedied, the budget will revert to the grantee's base funding level in the next budget year.

A **permanent** return of grant funding is appropriate when a sponsor has determined that the maximum number of VSYS it can support will require the grant size to be reduced. This reduction may not result in a grantee programming less than one VSY in work plans that result in either National Performance Measure outcomes, or outputs related to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities (if they have historically supported such programming) for every \$6,500 in annual base federal funding they receive.

**C. *AmeriCorps-Initiated Reduction of Funding***

AmeriCorps Seniors monitors the VSY levels associated with each grant award using the FFR. When a sponsor does not achieve the minimum VSY level allowed on the grant, portfolio

managers must notify a sponsor of its underachievement and engage the sponsor in taking prompt corrective action. When a sponsor continues to underachieve VSY levels, portfolio managers must take action that may ultimately result in a permanent reduction of funding on the grant.

The minimum VSY achievement level for most grants is:

- 37% of the annually budgeted VSYS at the semi-annual reporting period.
- 97% of the annually budgeted VSYS at the annual reporting period.

Grants with 24 or fewer VSYS and grants in their first three-year performance period are not subject to these specific minimums. Grantees at risk of VSY underperformance in these circumstances should contact their portfolio manager to develop a case-specific plan. These plans may utilize the same budgetary and non-budgetary remedies described here.

AmeriCorps will send the sponsor a notification of VSY underproduction letter that states what the problem is and offer choices for resolution according to the length of time the grant has not achieved the minimum VSY level. The portfolio manager will also work with the sponsor on developing or updating a corrective action plan.

If a sponsor continues to be unable to produce the number of agreed upon VSYS, AmeriCorps Seniors may take action that results in a reduction in VSY level. AmeriCorps Seniors may also take action that involves a reduction in the federal grant award.

## **10.4 GRANT AMENDMENTS AND REBUDGETING**

During implementation of a grant, a grantee may decide to make adjustments to the approved application. All grant amendments and budget changes should be made and documented into the system of record, but the following changes require prior AmeriCorps Seniors approval and amendment of the NGA:

- A change in the scope of service or a substantial change in goals or objectives.
- A change in key personnel specified in the application or federal award including a change in the authorized representative.
- A request for a project director at less than full time (please consult with your portfolio manager regarding this request before starting an amendment).
- The creation of a new budget line item where there will be a need for additional funds.
- The transfer of funds budgeted for direct costs to indirect costs.
- The request of a match waiver.
- Extension or reduction of the budget or performance budget period.

If the federal share of a grant is greater than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold amount of \$250,000 and the grantee's cumulative changes exceeds 10% of the total budget, the grantee must request prior approval to submit an amendment. AmeriCorps, as the federal awarding agency, cannot permit a transfer that would cause any federal appropriation to be used for purposes other than those consistent with the appropriation ([2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section 200.308](#)). Grantees should consult with your portfolio manager regarding budget changes, even if pre-approval is not required.

Grantees may initiate an amendment in eGrants at any time. AmeriCorps Seniors strongly encourages grantees to consult with your portfolio manager prior to starting the amendment. Your portfolio manager can advise you on issues such as the amendment types to select based on what you need to change, whether the changes can wait until continuation or renewal to reduce burden, whether an

amendment is necessary or if a memo to file will suffice, and other issues. There are certain amendment types that can only be selected by your portfolio manager. If you don't see an amendment type in eGrants that matches the changes you want to make, please contact your portfolio manager.

Amendments must be submitted by the grantee's authorized representative. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under their own account to submit the amendment. Please note that this is an electronic signature that results from submitting the grant application in the electronic grants management system, eGrants. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the grantee's office.

## **10.5 ACCESSING GRANT FUNDS AND MANAGING ADVANCES**

All AmeriCorps Seniors grantees are paid through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Payment Management Services](#), abbreviated as PMS. AmeriCorps Seniors grantees must establish an account with the HHS/PMS that allows them to draw down funds. When a grant is awarded in the electronic grants system, the grant is recorded in AmeriCorps's accounting system and transmitted to PMS which maintains an account for each grant. Grantees draw funds from that account.

### **10.5.1 Steps in setting up a PMS account**

Grantees who are new to direct AmeriCorps funding will receive an "Establishing New Grant with AmeriCorps" letter from the Office of Grant Administration (OGA) which will include information about how to set up a PMS account. Please contact your Portfolio Manager if you are a new grantee to direct AmeriCorps funding and you have not received this letter within 30 days of your notification of grant award.

### **10.5.2 How grantees request funds through PMS SMARTLINK**

Grantees use [SMARTLINK](#) to access funds. SMARTLINK is an automated "next day" direct deposit system for the Federal government. Recipients assigned to SMARTLINK use a PC to access the PMS SMARTLINK Request for Funds application, enter their account and drawdown information (e.g. account number and amount requested), and receive a status message detailing their transaction. The transaction is completed online, and funds are direct deposited into the recipient's account on the next business day.

Funds should only be drawn down for immediate cash needs or on a reimbursement basis. Grantees should develop written policies and procedures for drawdowns so that they are done on a consistent basis and a clear audit trail exists. [2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section 200.305](#)

Grantees may:

- Draw down funds on a reimbursement basis;
- Draw down funds that they will be using in the immediate future, usually considered to be within three days of receipt; or
  - Maintain advance payment of federal funds in interest bearing accounts unless the following apply: (See "Interest Earned on Advances" below.)
    - a. The grantee receives less than \$120,000 in Federal awards annually.
    - b. The account would not earn interest in excess of \$500 per year.
    - c. The depository would require an average or minimum balance so high that it would not be feasible within the expected Federal and non-Federal cash resources.

- d. A banking system prohibits or precludes interest bearing accounts.
  - Interest earned amounts up to \$500 per year may be retained by the non-Federal entity for administrative expense. Any additional interest earned on Federal advance payments deposited in interest-bearing accounts must be remitted annually to the Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System (PMS) through an electronic medium using either Automated Clearing House (ACH) network or a Fedwire Funds Service payment.

To learn more about using PMS, please see the PMS User Guide and the PMS Grant Recipient Training schedule. For help with PMS, please contact the PMS Help Desk at [PMSSupport@psc.hhs.gov](mailto:PMSSupport@psc.hhs.gov) or 877-614-5533. To contact the PMS Liaison Accountant for AmeriCorps Grants, visit <https://pms.psc.gov/find-pms-liaison-accountant.html>. In the “Grants Awarded by Non-U.S. Department and Health and Human Services” section, select “Corporation for National and Community Service” from the agency list and click “Go.”

### **10.5.3 Federal Cash Transactions Report – PSC 272 A**

Grantees report on funds by submitting quarterly [Federal Cash Transaction Reports](#) (PSC 272 A Report) directly to PMS. The PSC 272 A Report is an overview of the cash status of the account. It contains data provided by PMS to the recipient and the net disbursement amount as calculated by the recipient. The PSC 272 A Report is similar to a checking reconciliation and is used to report the amount of “Cash on Hand.” HHS monitors this amount and deducts any cash on hand amount from previous payment requests. At the end of the grant performance period, the SF 425 Federal Financial Report MUST reconcile with the PSC 272 A Report and the amount drawn down. If these three numbers are not identical, the grant cannot be closed.

### **10.5.4 Interest Earned on Advances**

Grantees are required to maintain advances of federal funds not used within 3 days in an interest-bearing account. The project will be allowed to retain the first \$500.00 of interest per year to cover administrative expenses. Interest earned above this amount must be remitted annually in a check made payable to the U.S. Treasury, to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Payment Management, P.O. Box 6021, Rockville, MD 20852.

The Cash Management Improvement Act and regulations (31 CFR Part 205) that established this requirement have some exceptions. The major ones that can impact an AmeriCorps Seniors grantee are as follows:

- State government grantees do not have to follow this requirement unless required to do so by the Department of Treasury Financial Management Service.
- Indian Tribal Governments are also exempt from this requirement.
- The recipient receives less than \$120,000.00 per year from all federal sources.
- The best reasonable available interest-bearing account would not have been expected to earn in excess of \$250.00 per year on the federal balance.

## **10.6 SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND DENIAL OF REFUNDING**

The rules on grant suspension, termination, and denial of refunding procedures are addressed in the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Program Regulations ([45 CFR § 2552.34](#)).

## **10.7 AUDIT REQUIREMENTS**

### **10.7.1 Single Audit**

Recipients of federal grant awards are required to have audits performed in accordance with the [Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996](#) (Single Audit Act), as amended. OMB Budget Guidance [Audit Requirements](#), provides guidance on audit requirements pursuant to the Single Audit Act. The [Audit Requirements](#) established that grant recipients that expend \$750,000 or more of federal funds in a year must have an independent auditor perform a single audit, or a program-specific audit. These audit requirements do not apply to organizations expending less than \$750,000 in total federal funds in a given year. When applicable, a single audit requires the sponsor to have an audit of its entire organization conducted by an independent auditor that essentially determines:

- If the organization's financial statements present its and the program's financial position fairly;
- If the institution has the internal control structure to ensure that the program is managing the award in accordance with the applicable federal laws and regulations; and
- That the program has complied with the applicable laws and regulations that may have a direct and material effect on the program's financial statement.

### **10.7.2 Other Audits**

In the case of sponsors whose total federal funding falls below the \$750,000 threshold established by the requirements of [OMB Post Federal Award Requirements \(2 CFR Chapter II, Part 200, Subpart D\)](#), the sponsor's policies apply. Sponsors are expected to follow generally accepted accounting practices. Sponsors directed by AmeriCorps to conduct an audit must provide copies of any audit report partially or wholly charged to the grant to the portfolio manager. Grantees need to follow applicable federal, state and local requirements for financial reporting and audits for their type of organization.

#### **Federal Audit Clearinghouse:**

Audits performed under the Single Audit Act are to be sent electronically to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

The Internet Data Entry System (IDES) is the place to submit the single audit reporting package, including form SF-SAC, to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC). Single audit submission is required under the Single Audit Act and 2 CFR § 200.512.

## **10.8 CONCLUSION**

Familiarize all staff with AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations, 2 CFR Chapters I and II](#), specifically OMB Cost Principles and OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements, to ensure compliance. Keep good documentation that demonstrates that costs are reasonable, necessary, allocable, allowable, and adhere to grant guidelines. Ensure that there is a clear audit trail for all financial reports from accounting system to data submitted. If you have a question, contact your Portfolio Manager.

## **10.9 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SECURING NON-AMERICORPS FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT**

The sponsor:

- A. Secures cash or in-kind contributions, amounts that regularly exceed the required non-AmeriCorps support for the project;
- B. Develops and maintains a diversified non-Federal funding base from the private sector, the nonprofit community, and state and local government;
- C. Has a commitment to secure non-AmeriCorps support for the project which is incorporated into the sponsor's resource development plan;
- D. Includes the project as a designated department in annual giving campaigns such as United Way;
- E. Demonstrates the project's role as an extension of its core services by directing opportunities, such as grants, specifically to the project;
- F. Has an established long-range resource development and mobilization program that includes the project as a key program to be supported;
- G. Designates a sponsor staff member to help generate the needed support;
- H. Actively engages its Board in developing non-Federal resources for the project;
- I. Works collaboratively with the project's entity for community participation as dual leaders in mobilizing resources for the project;
- J. Keeps project staff informed of the financial status of the project;
- K. Makes consistent progress toward expansion of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project with other funds;
- L. Learns from other sponsor's models for building successful partnerships and ways of addressing AmeriCorps Seniors-specific resource development and mobilization challenges;

## **10 Tips to Help Avoid Common Audit Findings**

Audit findings frequently result from **missing, incomplete, or insufficient documentation** that grant requirements have been met. Following are 10 steps to help avoid the more common audit findings:

1. Make sure current Memorandums of Understanding are on file for all volunteer stations where volunteers are serving (45 CFR 2552.23(2)).
2. Maintain documentation on file, updated annually, that shows that all enrolled volunteers meet the eligibility requirements (Age, Income, NSCHC, etc.) (45 CFR 2552.41 and 45 CFR 2552.42).
3. Ensure there are written assignment descriptions on file for all volunteers (45 CFR 2552.72).
4. Document the eligibility of beneficiaries of volunteer services, preferably in the assignment plan, and maintain these in the volunteer files (45 CFR 2552.81).
5. Retain supporting source documentation for all volunteer local travel reimbursements (45 CFR 2552.46(c)).
6. Ensure all grant funded staff have complete national service criminal history check documentation (45 CFR 2552(j)) and appropriate time tracking documentation kept on file. Time tracking documents should clearly show that any time spent on non-grant or unallowable activities, such as fund raising or working on other sponsor projects, has been appropriately allocated to other sponsor accounts.
7. Ensure your organization's written policies and your implementation procedures for National Service Criminal History Checks comply with the requirement (45 CFR 2552(j)). See Chapter 5 and the [Criminal History Check Resources webpage](#) carefully to be sure your written policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance. Ensure that there is clear documentation of how volunteer service hours (45 CFR 2552.51) and other cost reimbursements were tracked (45 CFR 2552.46) and these records are on file.
8. Document receipt and valuation of all in-kind contributions counted toward the required non-Federal share of the grant.
9. Submit all required reports, such as the Federal Financial Reports and Progress Reports, and make sure they are on time.
10. Document your organization's policies and procedures, including internal financial controls, in a manual or handbook.



## 11 REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING

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Reporting and recordkeeping are essential functions of project management to ensure proper stewardship of public funds and provide information needed to report to the Congress and Executive Branch of the Federal Government on expenditures, project progress, and accomplishments. General reporting and recordkeeping requirements are discussed in this chapter, but projects should always consult their specific Notice of Grant Award (NGA) [Terms and Conditions](#) for the specific requirements of their grant.

### 11.1 REPORTS

Every recipient of a federal grant is expected to submit reports on the expenditure of all funds identified within the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA contains standard [Terms and Conditions](#) that apply to all grantees, as well as special conditions, as applicable, to a specific grantee. You can print a copy of your NGA from the electronic grants system. [Terms and Conditions](#) are available online. For reporting related to federal grant funds drawn down by the grantee, see **Chapter 10**.

Financial reports provide information to portfolio managers about the total dollars expended. Progress Reports provide information about the service the volunteers are performing with respect to the project plan in the approved grant application. See [Appendix A.5](#) for report due dates.

#### 11.1.1 Financial Reports

##### 1) Federal Financial Report (FFR), Standard Form (SF) 425

The Federal Financial Report (FFR) is typically due on a semi-annual basis for each grant as specified in the [Terms and Conditions](#) referred to in your NGA. AmeriCorps Seniors grantees submit FFRs in the AmeriCorps grants management system. The FFR is used to report the following transactions: Federal Cash, Federal Expenditures and Unobligated Balance, Recipient Share, and Program Income

Typically, the [Terms and Conditions](#) issued with the NGA by AmeriCorps for AmeriCorps Seniors contain the following conditions regarding Federal Financial Reports:

- a) Grantees report expenditures semi-annually from the start date of the grant on the FFR, OMB Form SF-425, by submitting an electronically signed form in the AmeriCorps Seniors grants management system within 30 days of the end of each reporting period, as specified in the [Terms and Conditions](#) of the NGA.
- b) FFRs describe expenses on a cumulative basis over the performance period of the grant (3 years).
- c) Projects completing the final year of their grant must submit a final FFR that is cumulative over the entire grant period. This FFR is due 90 days after the close of the grant.

#### How Many Federal Financial Reports Are There?

Projects submit an “FFR” semi-annually to AmeriCorps through the electronic grants management system. Projects also complete an “FFR” in the PMS system regarding draw down of funds. These are different reports and both are required.

## 2) Federal Cash Transaction Report, Standard Form 272 (SF 272)

Grantees report on funds by submitting quarterly [Federal Cash Transaction Reports](#) (PSC 272 A Report) directly to PMS. The PSC 272 A Report is an overview of the cash status of the account. It contains data provided by PMS to the recipient and the net disbursement amount as calculated by the recipient. The PSC 272 A Report is similar to a checking reconciliation. At the end of the grant performance period, the SF 425 Federal Financial Report MUST reconcile with the PSC 272 A Report and the amount drawn down. If these three numbers are not identical, the grant cannot be closed. Payment Management Services provides answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) concerning the Payment Management System (see Chapter 10 for *How to request funds through PMS SMARTLINK*)

### References and Reminders

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- Keep the portfolio manager apprised of any questions, concerns, issues, or developments related to the grant.
- Use these source documents to review specific requirements and procedures for financial reporting:
  - Notice of Grant Award (NGA) including [Terms and Conditions](#), and any special conditions
  - FGP Federal Regulations ([45 CFR 2552](#))
  - Refer to [the Resource section of the FGP Grantee page, select action, Submit A Federal Financial Report \(FFR\)](#) for help with the FFR.
- Funds returned to AmeriCorps Seniors at the close out of the grant relationship with AmeriCorps Seniors or for disallowance of grant costs are to be forwarded to AmeriCorps's collection officer in the OGA, **but only as directed by the portfolio manager**(See [Appendix A.3: Guidance for Closing Out Your AmeriCorps Grant](#)).
- Delays in submitting FFRs may cause advance or reimbursement requests to be delayed until the overdue FFR is received.

### **11.1.2 Progress Reports**

#### 1) Progress Report Annual

The *Progress Report Annual* is used to ensure AmeriCorps Seniors FGP grantees address and fulfill legislated program purposes; meet agency program management and grant requirements; track and measure progress to benefit the local project and its contributions to volunteers and the community.

Projects report progress toward meeting the objectives of the project plan which consists of the series of work plans agreed upon in the awarded grant. In addition to project plan reports, narratives in the Progress Report Annual are used to report challenges encountered, partnerships developed, non-federal fund development, volunteer stories, and other accomplishments.

Progress reports are prepared and submitted in the AmeriCorps electronic grants management system at the end of the budget year, unless noted otherwise on the NGA or in the [Terms and Conditions](#) for your grant. The due date is no later than 30 days after the end of the reporting period. (See the [AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Grantee page](#) for the *Progress Report Instructions* and [Appendix A.4](#) for Progress Report Tips.)

## 2) Progress Report Supplement

The *Progress Report Supplement* (PRS) is the annual data collection conducted by AmeriCorps to aggregate the latest numbers and accomplishments of AmeriCorps Seniors grantees.

The sponsor completes the PRS in the AmeriCorps electronic grants management system in the first quarter of the federal fiscal year (October – December). The report asks the project to provide a statistical profile of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serving during the 12-month reporting period, including volunteer demographics and project activities.

## 3) **Note: Late submission of financial or progress reports may result in the AmeriCorps Seniors placing a temporary hold on grant funds. A temporary hold is implemented if the report is not received by AmeriCorps within 45 calendar days after the established due date. An established due date includes an extended due date, when applicable.**

## 11.2 RECORDKEEPING

As required by [45 CFR 2552.25\(g\)](#), the sponsor must develop recordkeeping and reporting systems in compliance with AmeriCorps Seniors requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations and facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports. The sponsor's records also document compliance with regulatory programmatic and fiscal requirements and must be available to AmeriCorps staff to review on compliance monitoring site visits or in case of audit.

Records, including timesheets and requests for cost reimbursements, may be stored either digitally or in hard copy, given all other necessary conditions for the document in question are met. Necessary conditions include but aren't limited to review and approval by appropriate signatories, records retention requirements, and security requirements.

When signatures are required, an electronic version is permissible when appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that the signature can only be provided by the person in question. An example of this is an online tracking system where individuals have unique login credentials. Adobe Acrobat forms also have functionalities that allow for unique digital signatures.

Records may be subject to state law or local ordinance governing access to records.

### 11.2.1 Sponsor Records on Volunteer Stations

The project maintains a file on each volunteer station containing:

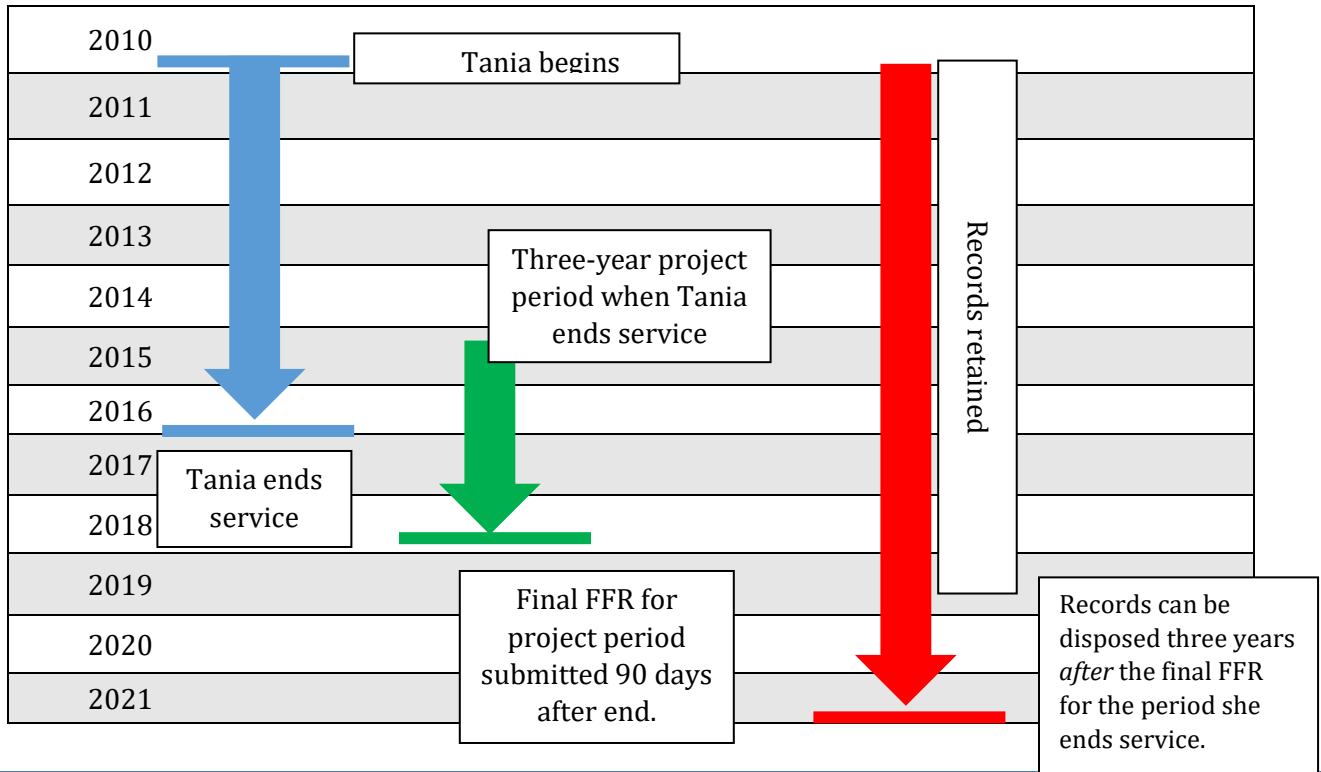
1. A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding. (See Chapter 6 for more information about the MOU)
2. Letters of Agreement, where there are in-home assignments through the volunteer station.
3. A listing by name of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers placed at the volunteer station.

### Maintaining Complete Volunteer Files

Maintaining complete volunteer files for the length of time required by law is critical for a sponsor to remain in compliance with federal recordkeeping requirements. See [Appendix C.9](#) for a checklist of everything that you need to maintain in a volunteer file. Among the most important components are the ones that you must complete annually to establish and maintain volunteer eligibility such as documenting income eligibility. You must maintain copies of these key documents for **each year** a volunteer serves. For example, if a volunteer has served for the past eight years, you should have eight income eligibility reviews in their file.

When can you dispose of these records? With some exceptions, federal recordkeeping requirements require grantees to retain all documents associated with a grant – including volunteer files – for three (3) years from the date you submit the final FFR for the relevant project period ([2 CFR 200.333](#)). For volunteers, this means that you should maintain files for at least three years after the FFR associated with the three-year project period when the volunteer leaves service.

For example, suppose Tania begins volunteering with your program in 2010 and continues volunteering until 2016, when she exits your program. Your grant performance period runs from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2018. You submit your final FFR for that performance period 90 days after the end date of June 30, 2018, which is September 30, 2018. You can dispose of Tania’s files *three years after that* – September 30, 2021, or after. This means that as late as September 29, 2021, you should still be able to access all of Tania’s files – including her first income eligibility review.



### **11.2.2 Sponsor Records on Individual AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers**

The project should maintain records for each volunteer containing:

1. An enrollment form signed and dated by the volunteer, including name, address, telephone number and date of birth.
2. A signed Designation of Beneficiary (for insurance purposes).
3. The name of the volunteer station(s) where the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP is placed.
4. A copy of the written assignment description for each volunteer or a notation that the volunteer's assignment description is maintained at the volunteer station.
5. The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's service schedule and verification of actual hours served.
6. A copy of the current written volunteer assignment plan.
7. Documentation of a physical examination if applicable to your project.
8. An income eligibility review for each year a volunteer participates as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, including the volunteer's initial income eligibility review from their enrollment, an income eligibility review that has been completed within the past 12 months, and all such annual reviews in between as applicable.
9. The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's annual performance appraisal.
10. Sponsor are required to have documentation verifying that the required National Service Criminal History checks (NSCHC) were conducted, the results were evaluated, and the sponsor's NSCHC policy is on file and available for AmeriCorps Seniors compliance monitoring and for other audit purposes. Confidential files should be secured to protect identity. ***Grantees that do not have documentation to show compliance with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance.*** Please read the [NSCHC webpage](#) carefully to be sure your policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance with the requirement.

See the box on the prior page on maintaining complete volunteer files for more information.

(See [Appendix C.9](#) for a sample volunteer files check list.)

### **11.2.3 Personally Identifiable Information**

All volunteer records are confidential and must be kept in secured files to protect all personally identifiable information (PII). Personal information about volunteers contained on the enrollment form, such as home address, should be disclosed only with the expressed prior written permission of the volunteer.

When you create, collect, use, process, store, maintain, disseminate, disclose, or dispose of PII related to your grant award, you must have policies and procedures in place to manage this information and to guide your response in the event of a breach. You are required to promptly notify individuals who are affected or potentially affected by a breach. You must also promptly notify AmeriCorps Seniors of any such breaches. The resources below may help you develop or strengthen your policy or procedures related to responding to a breach.

#### **11.2.4 What Is a Breach?**

A breach is the loss of control, compromise, unauthorized disclosure, unauthorized acquisition, or any similar occurrence where (1) a person other than an authorized user accesses or potentially accesses personally identifiable information or (2) an authorized user accesses or potentially accesses personally identifiable information for an other than authorized purpose. Your response to a breach must include notifying AmeriCorps Seniors of the breach.

#### **11.2.5 Responding to a Breach**

You should establish a policy and procedures that:

1. Explain when and how you will promptly notify potentially affected individuals.
2. Outline when and how you will promptly notify AmeriCorps Seniors. You may want to incorporate a breach reporting form similar to the form located [here](#).
3. Satisfy any additional requirements like those issued by state law or those specific to your organization. Resources, like the [National Conference of State Legislatures Security Breach Notifications Laws](#) list, may help you identify the privacy notification laws for your state.

The [U.S. Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center](#) also maintains an online toolkit that provides a body of resources and best practices on this subject that you can customize for your needs.

#### **11.2.6 Data Collection and Retention (including Financial Data)**

- 1) Periodic Data Collection: Accuracy and timeliness of reports are facilitated by collecting and recording data needed on a regular basis using consistent procedures and tools.
- 2) Keep records of how data was collected: Data reported must be verifiable.
- 3) Retain Records: Data collected, including financial records, must be retained for at least three years from the date the grantee submits the final FFR for the project period or three years past the last audit, whichever is most recent. As volunteer service often extends across multiple grant years, volunteer records must be maintained for at least three years from the date the grantee submits the final FFR for the three-year grant cycle in which the volunteer exited service or three years past the last audit, whichever is later. This is also discussed in more depth in the box on page 92.
- 4) Volunteer Timesheets: Sponsors are required to ensure that timesheets or electronic time and attendance records are maintained that display the actual hours served by each volunteer. To create a system of internal controls, the timesheets or electronic time and attendance records should be signed or validated by the individual volunteer and the responsible volunteer station supervisor. The project supervisor or director may also sign or validate the timesheets or electronic time and attendance records.
- 5) Salary and Wage Documentation: Following is a summary of the requirements for documenting project staff time and attendance from the [2 CFR 200](#) Grants and Agreements.
  - a. Be supported by a system of internal controls and incorporated into the official records of the organization.
  - b. Reflect an after-the-fact distribution of the employee's actual work activity for each pay period.

- c. Reflect the total activity of each employee paid from the grant.
  - d. Comply with the established accounting policies and practices of the organization.
  - e. Be signed by the employee or supervisor having firsthand knowledge and certified by an authorized sponsor official.
- 6) National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) for staff: The NSCHC is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. For AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, the requirements apply to anyone receiving any part of their salary from the FGP grant funds (federal or non-federal share) and all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Sponsors are required to have documentation verifying that the required checks were made, the results were evaluated, and the sponsor NSCHC policy is on file and available for AmeriCorps compliance monitoring and for other audit purposes. Confidential files should be secured to protect identity. Grantees that do not comply with the NSCHC requirements may be subject to cost disallowance. Please read the NSCHC webpage carefully to be sure your policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance with the requirement. (See Handbook Chapter 5 for more information.)
- 7) In-Kind Contributions: Documentation for in-kind contributions must record donation and valuation of each item. The value of In-kind contributions should be entered into the general ledger and the Federal Financial Report submitted to AmeriCorps Seniors.
  - a. To be acceptable as non-federal share (match) all cash and/or in-kind donations must meet the Cost Principles requirement that the cost (donation) must be **allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable** for the performance of the grant award.
  - b. To value an in-kind contribution, fair market value is the standard. Fair market value (FMV) is the price that property would sell for on the open market. It is the price that would be agreed on between a willing buyer and a willing seller, with neither being required to act, and both having reasonable knowledge of the relevant facts. If a donor puts a restriction on the use of donated property, the recipient of the donation must honor that restriction. Finally, the in-kind voucher form signed by the donor should be reviewed to ensure the value is reasonable and comparable with other estimates or bases for value.
  - c. The in-kind voucher justifies the valuation of personal services, material equipment, building, and other non-cash donations. The voucher should include: the name and signature of the donor, the date, the location of the donation, a description of the item/service donated, and the estimated value of the donation. Grantees should acknowledge the contribution with a receipt that includes the name of donor, date and location of donation, a description of item/service, and the estimated value. A copy of the receipt should be kept in sponsor's files. For more information see [Appendix A.14: Sample In-Kind Contribution Form](#) and [Tutorial: Valuing, Documenting, and Recording In-Kind Match](#).
- 8) Reimbursement Claims: Documentation for all Volunteer Expenses related to transportation, meals, and/or other costs claimed during the period of volunteer service must for compliance monitoring or audit purposes:

- a. Contain the volunteer’s name, number or other identifying information used by the project.
  - b. Specify the type of expense reimbursement such as mileage or meals.
  - c. Specify the amount to be reimbursed.
  - d. State the reason for reimbursement.
  - e. Include documentation of the expense required by the sponsor.
  - f. Specify the date the expense was incurred.
  - g. Provide a way for the volunteer to certify that the expense was incurred during service hours.
- 9) Projects that use timesheets may incorporate volunteer expense claims on the timesheet form. Costs must be verified by signatures of the volunteer, the volunteer station supervisor, and designated AmeriCorps Seniors FGP staff. (See [Appendix C.3](#) for a sample timesheet that incorporates hours of service, and mileage expenses.)
- 10) Using AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP for Data Collection/Recordkeeping: AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can be assigned by project directors to various tasks that involve data collection and recordkeeping (For more information regarding AmeriCorps Seniors FGP sponsors as volunteer station see Chapter 6).

**Reminder**

Travel to and from home to the volunteer assignment, and mealtimes that are not part of the assignment description, are not to be included in hours of service.

### **11.2.7 Counting and Reporting Volunteers in AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, Performance Measures, and Other Metrics**

AmeriCorps Seniors FGP projects are responsible for having a system that allows them to track all required data accurately and in sufficient detail to meet the requirements of the progress reports, including the Progress Report Supplement.

- 1) Reporting requirements for the Progress Reports and the Progress Report Supplement are found in the NGA or the [Terms and Conditions](#) for your grant.
- 2) The reported number of volunteers serving, and hours served should be approximately equal to or greater than the numbers projected in the budget. AmeriCorps Seniors will monitor and verify numbers reported.
- 3) See “Criteria for an Effective AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP Service Tracking System” in the following box.



**Criteria for an Effective AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Service Tracking System**

1. The system is documented in written sponsor policies as the standard used by the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project and:
  - (a) Defines and describes the system
  - (b) Identifies tools to be used
  - (c) Identifies allowable persons and authentication method such as hard copy signature or e-mail
  - (d) Specified location of official records
  - (e) Requires storage and retrieval of records – hard copy or electronically
2. The system's reporting tools, such as the following, are consistent with sponsor policy:
  - (a) Hard copy time sheet
  - (b) Hard copy group sign in sheet
  - (c) E-mails relating to a volunteer's hours are sent by an appropriate, authorized person – e.g., the volunteer's supervisor or the volunteer.
  - (d) Electronic group sign-in sheet
  - (e) Telephone report by volunteer supervisor or volunteer with written confirmation consistent with the sponsor policy
  - (f) Fax or Scan
  - (g) Web-based system
3. The system provides assurances that the person reporting the hours is authorized to do so – such as the volunteer or the volunteer station supervisor.
4. If hours are submitted via e-mail by the AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer or the volunteer station supervisor:
  - (a) Sender uses an e-mail system that requires a recognizable sign-in name that is registered with the sponsor/project as the volunteer.
  - (b) The e-mail is addressed to the person identified by the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/sponsor policies as having the authority to accept and view e-mails reporting hours.
  - (c) The system used by the e-mail recipient (i.e. AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Project Director) is capable of storing and retrieving the e-mails reporting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer hours.

### **11.3 PROJECT COMPLIANCE MONITORING**

AmeriCorps is required to monitor awardees. Limited resources require the Office of Monitoring (OM) to direct monitoring resources to areas that pose specific risks to the agency. AmeriCorps uses a data-driven, internal risk assessment module which categorizes grants by a level of risk, and groups these risk and performance indicators into the following categories: financial, programmatic, organizational, and compliance. This risk model informs OM of the type of issue-specific monitoring activities that should be assigned to grants.

AmeriCorps's monitoring framework consists of issue-based monitoring activities that link AmeriCorps Seniors objectives with the monitoring process. Monitoring of AmeriCorps Seniors awardees supports AmeriCorps' ability to:

- Test compliance with AmeriCorps Seniors legal, regulatory and policy requirements
- Identify and minimize potential risks to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors
- Identify specific technical assistance needs
- Provide guidance and technical assistance
- Analyze recurring problems

Monitoring activities:

- Vary in length, scope, and intensity;
- Can be conducted via various methods, such as on-site at grant recipient locations or remotely from AmeriCorps headquarters
- Can include a combination of one or more issue-based monitoring activities from the OM Uniform Monitoring Package (UMP), or monitoring toolkit
- Can be initiated when a level of risk, along with other programmatic and/or fiscal indicators, warrant such an intervention
- Can be assigned randomly to grants with low or medium levels of risk, as a method of validating the grant portfolio risk assessment module and monitoring selection methodology.

Monitoring activities and outcomes can help to forge working relationships with recipients and partners, and to facilitate conversations about program successes, innovations, and challenges.

#### **11.3.1 MONITORING ACTIVITY TYPES**

OM uses a Uniform Monitoring Package (UMP) which consists of five issue-based compliance assessments. The UMP can be applied wholly to a grant award or separated to apply one or more of the issue-based compliance assessments, as determined by a grant's risk assessment results. The issue-based monitoring activity types are as follows:

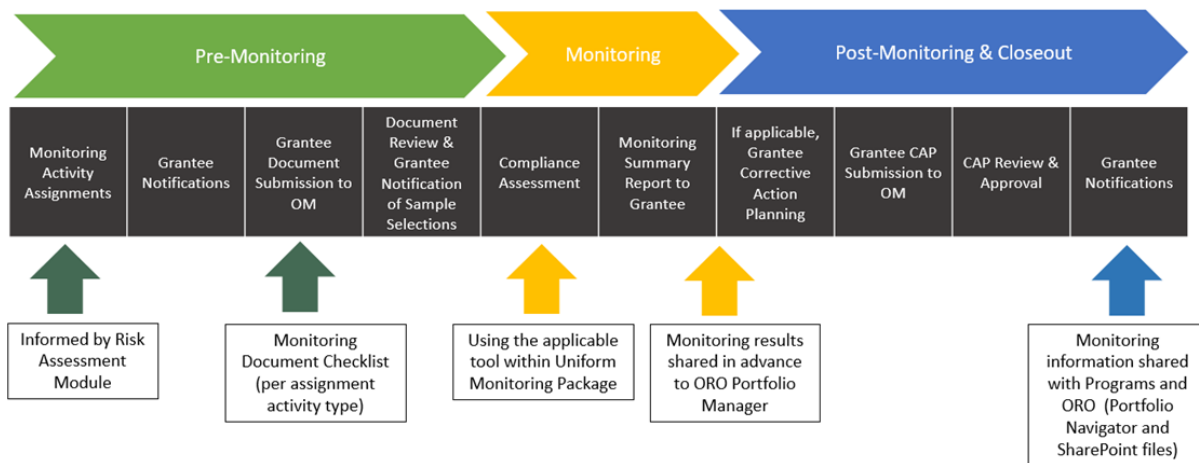
- AmeriCorps Program-Specific Compliance: Document review and interviews of a sample of members/volunteers, their supervisors, and grantee staff to assess compliance specific to the grant program (AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors).
- Financial and Operational Fitness Assessment (FOFA): Document review, including grantee application submission of Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS), if applicable, and cost-testing to assess compliance with key regulations of 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Guidance, including timekeeping practices.

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 11: Reports and Recordkeeping*

- National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC): Review of NSCHC records for entities required to comply with 45 CFR §§ 2540.200-207. NSCHC grant records are sampled in accordance with the NSCHC Manual.
- Subrecipient Monitoring Oversight: Document review to assess a prime grantee’s compliance with 2 CFR § 200.331, Requirements for pass-through entities.
- Prohibited Activities: Interviews of a sample of members/volunteers, their supervisors, and grantee staff to assess compliance with 45 CFR § 2540.100 and other regulations addressing AmeriCorps prohibited activities for individual grant programs.
- New to AmeriCorps: This activity is assigned to first time AmeriCorps grantees. It will consist of a review of grantee policies, practices, and systems with the intention of confirming that a recipient's foundational practices comply with federal and program requirements. This activity will touch on selected items from the FOFA, Prohibited Activities, NSCHC, Programmatic, and Subrecipient Oversight monitoring activities, as applicable.

Prior to conducting monitoring assessments, AmeriCorps monitoring officials will notify awardees of their selection for one or more monitoring activities. These notifications consist of email communications with a letter from the Office of Monitoring and will describe the type of monitoring activity to be conducted, the timeframe for responding to requests for information, and instructions for providing secure file transfers, if applicable to the monitoring activity type. Notifications are addressed to the awardee’s Authorized Representative with a courtesy copy to the Program Director and the AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager. Timeframes for each phase of the monitoring activities vary across projects. OM will make continued efforts to keep awardees informed of the status of monitoring activities, including when to expect monitoring results.

If an awardee is selected for an on-site monitoring visit, AmeriCorps monitoring officials will provide at least 30-days’ notice of the planned visit and will provide details about the type of documentation to be made available, as well as coordinating interviews with staff and/or volunteers. The following image depicts the AmeriCorps monitoring activity lifecycle:



All monitoring reports are provided to the AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager, for awareness.

### **11.3.2 Monitoring Results and Corrective Action**

At the completion of monitoring activities, OM communicates monitoring results to grantees, including findings of noncompliance, in order to mitigate financial, programmatic and operational risks and resolve noncompliance. OM consults with the ORO Portfolio Manager (PM) to share the monitoring results and review any corrective measures that may be required of the grantee.

If, during any phase of the monitoring activity, a monitoring official discovers potential waste, fraud, or abuse, this information will be reported to the AmeriCorps-OIG, per AmeriCorps Policy.

Monitoring results may include Findings, which are a violation of compliance with Federal statute, regulations, or AmeriCorps grant program policy. If a Finding is identified, OM will require the awardee to resolve the finding(s) of noncompliance by developing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). OM will provide the awardee with a timeframe in which the CAP must be submitted, as well as a CAP template to help determine the root cause of the issue(s), appropriate corrective measures, and measurable outcomes that indicate whether the finding(s) was resolved. OM will coordinate consultation with the PM during the CAP development and implementation process as an added level of technical assistance in developing an efficient plan for avoiding future recurrence of noncompliance.

To facilitate this process OM will review the CAP submitted by the awardee and either:

- Approve the plan.
- Decline the plan and provide suggested modifications to be integrated into the CAP, to be resubmitted to OM for review and approval.

As findings of noncompliance may significantly vary between awardees, so may the timeframe for implementing resolution and improvement. OM will approve plans that have demonstrated resolution of noncompliance and will require awardees to make the corrective actions completable within a year.

For findings requiring continuous improvement, OM will approve the plan for grantee implementation and evaluate the impact of the CAP in future monitoring assessments. In general, the nature of the findings and size of federal funding will dictate the level and timing of resources contributed to validating the CAP's outcomes and resolution of noncompliance.

Depending on the nature of noncompliance and applicable AmeriCorps policy, OM may recommend one or more enforcement actions such as disallowing costs, withholding of further grant payments, or wholly or partly suspending the grant, pending corrective action. OM may also recommend the termination of the grant for cause.

## **11.4 MONITORING RESOURCES**

The resources on the [AmeriCorps Monitoring page](#) are currently aimed at the Office of Monitoring's second round of monitoring. The page hosts resources that sponsors need to access to comply with monitoring requests as of April, 2021. While sponsors may access anything hosted on this page, AmeriCorps would like to emphasize that the development of our office means that future processes and resources may change.

### **11.4.1 Resources**

Specific resources located in the 'Resources' section on the [AmeriCorps Monitoring page include:](#)

- **Remote Monitoring - At a Glance:** Provides information on the steps and timeline of the remote monitoring process from initial notification to the resolution of the corrective action plan.
- **On-Site Monitoring - At a Glance:** Provides information on the steps and timeline of the on-site monitoring process from initial notification to the resolution of the corrective action plan.
- **Overview of Uniform Monitoring Package:** Shows each of the question items across all of Office of Monitoring's tools that Monitoring Officers use to make compliance determinations. Grantees are able to use this in developing their own tools for overseeing their AmeriCorps Seniors programs.
- **Guide to Developing Corrective Action Plans:** Assists in the development of creating corrective action plan responses after monitoring findings are issued to grantees, if applicable.
- **Office of Monitoring FAQs**
- Specific document requests and forms used to complete monitoring activities, such as the Segregation of Duties worksheet, AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Roster, and List of Subawards Worksheet.

## **11.5 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING**

- A. The project is familiar with the reports required to fulfill the grant terms and conditions, and regularly submits accurate reports by the required deadlines, including:
  1. Progress Report Annual
  2. Progress Report Supplemental (Annually);
  3. Federal Financial Report (Every 6 months).
- B. The project discusses reports and requirements with its Portfolio Manager if any information requested is unclear.
- C. The project designates accounting professionals within the sponsoring organization to take the lead in financial reporting.
- D. The project develops an overall information collection and reporting system plan.
  1. The project uses the Project Work Plans and Performance Measures as blueprints to guide systems that will capture information and data for reporting.
  2. If possible, the project invests in a volunteer management software tool to streamline and automate its ongoing data collection and volunteer tracking. See [Appendix A.6](#) for a list of software packages available and vendor contact information.
- E. For performance measurement data collection and reporting, the project:
  1. Works in conjunction with the volunteer stations hosting the volunteers. The project coordinates with volunteer station supervisors to link into the station's data and reporting systems, rather than independently establishing its own unique systems.

Volunteer stations exist to deliver specific services to the community and those served and will likely have methods and resource persons available that can be utilized to track volunteer accomplishments without having to start from scratch.

2. Ensures that the volunteer station supervisors and personnel who will assist with data and information collection understand the needs related to the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers if the project's request includes or anticipates new data elements or types of information.
  3. Incorporates data and information collection into the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station.
- F. The project directors are encouraged to communicate with other AmeriCorps Seniors project directors to share ideas, receive recommendations, trade tips, and provide suggestions and support.

## **12 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

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### **12.1 COORDINATION WITH OTHER AMERICORPS PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Days of service and special initiatives are an integral part of the way that AmeriCorps meets our mission. They allow us to showcase at a national and local level how our service supports specific issues. Each grantee can participate in these events in a variety of ways that range from hosting an event that aligns particularly well with the sponsoring organization's mission to collaborating with other AmeriCorps streams of service to remain engaged and connected to our shared vision.

The sponsor is highly encouraged to coordinate activities with other AmeriCorps programs, including AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC, AmeriCorps VISTA, and the Volunteer Generation Fund. Moreover, the sponsor can coordinate activities with other project-related groups and individuals that have strategic objectives similar to those of AmeriCorps, such as those representing state and local governments, State Service Commissions; industry, labor, and volunteer organizations; programs for children; programs for the aging; and health-care organizations. The goal of such coordination is to facilitate cooperation with existing or planned community services and to develop community support. These coordination activities are specifically encouraged around the following programmatic activities:

- a) *National Days of Service*: Each year, AmeriCorps spearheads the effort to encourage Americans to volunteer in their communities during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance. On these days of service, AmeriCorps provides tools and resources for organizations and individuals to become engaged in service activities. Joining together with regional or local national service programs increases the visibility of the service projects, and reduces duplication of administrative efforts to coordinate events.
- b) *Special Initiatives*: AmeriCorps supports a variety of special initiatives such as National Service Recognition Day and National Mentoring Month. These events and priorities, like National Days of Service, are best implemented in your community in partnership with other national service projects serving in your region.
- c) *Coordinated Recruitment*: In some communities, national service programs are looking to recruit distinctly separate candidates in the same communities. Coordinating around recruitment efforts and encouraging referrals when a candidate is not a good fit for your program but maybe a good fit for another program strengthens the national service network and helps everyone meet their recruitment goals.

Sponsors should use sound planning and preparation to generate local support. Development of cost sharing support can be facilitated by integrating the project into the community. Suggested steps toward achieving coordination are:

- a) Prepare a brief summary of the project, its plans and accomplishments, its value to the community, and a statement of the types and amounts of support it needs.

- b) Conduct a thoughtful assessment of the stakeholders of your program. Stakeholders include all organizations, businesses, and municipalities, which are benefiting from the impact of your program. Stakeholders could also include any organizations that are working toward the same goals in your service area.
  1. Schedule meetings with stakeholders and individuals or groups who can contribute to the project or who can influence others to contribute.
  2. Follow up the meeting with each person or group contacted with a thank you, additional information, or an opportunity to continue to work together.
  3. Strengthen the above activities by involving selected members of the FGP advisory council.
  4. Collaborate with other AmeriCorps Seniors projects to generate statewide, citywide, countywide, and multi-county support.

## **12.2 PUBLIC AWARENESS**

- 1) A strong community relations program ensures public awareness of start-up activities and continuing project development.
- 2) The project sponsor should keep social service agencies; city, county, and state elected officials; governmental department heads; community organizations, including those serving senior citizens; and the media updated about the project's development, services, growth, and accomplishments.
- 3) Public awareness can be advanced through public speaking appearances by staff and advisory council members before service clubs, fraternal organizations, religious groups, and meetings with local, county, and state governmental units. [Public relations materials](#) about AmeriCorps's programs and [media kit materials](#) are available at the AmeriCorps website.
- 4) Active support of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council enhances community interest in project activities. Some AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory councils have formed community relations or publicity and marketing committees which assist the project in building awareness, coordinating with other community groups, and speaking about AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers before organizations in which they are active.
- 5) AmeriCorps Seniors FGP is included in the AmeriCorps national advertising program. Through AmeriCorps's Office of Government Relations and Strategic Engagement, continuing efforts are made to place program information and human-interest stories in national and local publications.
- 6) Public awareness of the nationwide program and of the local project should be promoted regularly through local media, a project website and social media accounts. Systematic contacts with newspapers, radio, and TV should be established and maintained. Announcements of local news value should be prepared and forwarded to the media. (See **Chapter 1**, Office of Government Relations and Strategic Engagement, for more information and tools.) Some examples of newsworthy announcements are:
  - a) The establishment of a new volunteer station at a site that is of significant importance or well recognized in the community.



- b) The appointment of new members to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council or the establishment of a special committee of the advisory council that addresses issues that are significant to your community.
  - c) Statements made by elected officials, and other governmental and civic leaders in support of the project.
  - d) Achievement of a measurable impact on a critical community need.
  - e) Any special AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project event, such as key community service projects and the presentation of awards to the volunteers or to the project staff for significant achievements.
  - f) Engagement of the community and the volunteers around the National Days of Service or other AmeriCorps Special Initiatives.
- 7) Engaging in social media is a vital part of a modern public engagement plan. With the popularity of social media many community members are learning about the news in their community through social media platforms. For many projects, social media engagement is the driving vehicle for recruitment, recognition and communicating the impact of their program.
- 8) Particularly in smaller communities, the news media are usually interested in providing time or space for interviews with AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers or project staff. They are especially receptive to human interest stories.

## **12.3 EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **I. Effective Practices for Increasing the Visibility of Service to the Community by Older Volunteers**

The project:

- A. Develops, implements, and periodically updates a plan to promote ongoing community awareness of and support for the project.
- B. Makes presentations about the project to community organizations and interested parties;
- C. Has a media awareness campaign to promote community awareness and support;
- D. Has a presence on social media platforms;
- E. Develops active roles for all stakeholders, including sponsor staff, project director, sponsor Board, volunteers, AmeriCorps Seniors FGP advisory council, and volunteer station staff, in promoting the project in the community;
- F. Can demonstrate that the community recognizes the project's contributions to meeting community needs by acknowledging the project or individual volunteers;
- G. Broadly disseminates information on project accomplishment and impact to the community, volunteer stations, volunteers, funding supporters, other community agencies, the general public, the AmeriCorps Seniors, and other key stakeholders so that:

- H. The community perceives the project as a leader in effectively meeting critical community needs; and
- I. The community perceives AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers as active seniors who meet critical community needs.

## **II. Effective Practices for Coordinating AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Services**

The project and volunteer stations:

- A. Collaborate with other AmeriCorps funded national service programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and other AmeriCorps Seniors programs, to meet critical community needs;
- B. Participate in the National Days of Service and AmeriCorps Special Initiatives in partnership with other national service projects in their service area; and
- C. Build broad-based relationships in the community, including the business sector, to gain their support for older volunteers.

## 13 AMERICORPS SENIORS FGP HANDBOOK CROSS REFERENCE INDEX

### URL Links and Appendices Documents by Chapter

This index lists the links and appendices documents that are included in the FGP Handbook for easy reference. The chart lists the chapter, the name of the link, the complete URL that you can click or cut-and-paste into your browser, and the number and title of the appendix document.

Links to AmeriCorps Seniors [FGP Program Regulations](#): All of the Handbook chapters have links to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. The regulations governing AmeriCorps Seniors FGP are in Chapter XXV, Part 2552, of the Code of Federal Regulations which is typically cited as “45 CFR 2552.” Use the reference numbers in the link to find the specific regulation you need. For example: [45 CFR 2552.22](#) refers to the *Responsibilities of FGP Sponsor*.

URL for 45 CFR 2552:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV/part-2552>

	Chapter 1
AmeriCorps NCCC webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-nccc">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-nccc</a>
AmeriCorps Programs webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve">https://americorps.gov/serve</a>
AmeriCorps State & National webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-state-national">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-state-national</a>
AmeriCorps VISTA webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-vista">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-vista</a>
AmeriCorps Electronic Grants System	<a href="https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp">https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp</a>
AmeriCorps Communications Resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources">https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources</a>
AmeriCorps National Performance Measures	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
AmeriCorps Strategic Plan	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/strategic-plan">https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/strategic-plan</a>
Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act	<a href="https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg3127.pdf#page=1">https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg3127.pdf#page=1</a>
eGrants Helpdesk/ National Service Hotline	<a href="https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask">https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask</a>
Evaluation Resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources</a>
Evidence Exchange	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange">https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange</a>
Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships	<a href="http://americorps.gov/partner">http://americorps.gov/partner</a>
Federal Register	<a href="https://www.federalregister.gov/">https://www.federalregister.gov/</a>
Financial Management Resources	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management</a>
Foster Grandparent Program webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program</a>

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 13: AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index*

Funding Opportunities Webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities">https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities</a>
Litmos (AmeriCorps' Learning Management System)	<a href="https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/">https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/</a>
Litmos Self-Sign Up	<a href="https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/">https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/</a>
Marketing and Media	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/senior-corps/resources-senior-corps-programs">https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/senior-corps/resources-senior-corps-programs</a>
Media materials	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources">https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources</a>
National and Community Service Act of 1990	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1990_serviceact_as%20amended%20through%20pl%2011-13.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1990_serviceact_as%20amended%20through%20pl%2011-13.pdf</a>
National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993	<a href="https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg785.pdf">https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg785.pdf</a>
National Service Criminal History Checks	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check</a>
National Service in Your State	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact">https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact</a>
National Service Timeline	<a href="https://nationalservice.gov/about/who-we-are/national-service-timeline">https://nationalservice.gov/about/who-we-are/national-service-timeline</a>
AmeriCorps website	<a href="https://americorps.gov/">https://americorps.gov/</a>
Ordering AmeriCorps Publications	<a href="https://promote.americorps.gov/">https://promote.americorps.gov/</a>
Outreach Resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom">https://americorps.gov/newsroom</a>
AmeriCorps Seniors Branding Guidelines	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom">https://americorps.gov/newsroom</a>
FGP Program Regulations	<a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&amp;rgn=div5&amp;view=text&amp;node=45:4.1.9.11.35&amp;idno=45">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&amp;rgn=div5&amp;view=text&amp;node=45:4.1.9.11.35&amp;idno=45</a>
FGP webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program</a>
Senior Companion Program webpage	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-senior-companion-program">https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-senior-companion-program</a>
AmeriCorps Seniors Programs	<a href="https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors">https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors</a>
AmeriCorps Seniors Resources landing page	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors</a>
Social Innovation Fund	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund">http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund</a>
Special Initiatives including: ML King Day of Service, SC Week, and more.	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom/events">https://americorps.gov/newsroom/events</a>
Terms and Conditions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Grantee and Sponsors resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors</a>
Uniform Guidance	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance">https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance</a>
Veterans and Military Families	<a href="http://www.americorps.gov/about/what-we-do/veterans">http://www.americorps.gov/about/what-we-do/veterans</a>
Volunteering and Civic Life in America report	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via">https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via</a>
U.S. Government Manual	<a href="http://www.usgovernmentmanual.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1">http://www.usgovernmentmanual.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1</a>

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 13: AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index*

	<b>Chapter 2</b>
Funding Opportunities	<a href="https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities">https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities</a>
Grants.gov	<a href="http://www.grants.gov/">http://www.grants.gov/</a>
Appendix A.12	Guidance on Prohibition on Fee-for-Service
AmeriCorps website	<a href="https://americorps.gov/">https://americorps.gov/</a>
Non-Displacement of Employed Workers 45 CFR 1216.1.1 – 1216.1.4	<a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt45.4.1216&amp;rgn=div5">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt45.4.1216&amp;rgn=div5</a>
Frequently Asked Questions on Lobbying	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/frequently-asked-questions-regarding-restrictions-lobbying">https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/frequently-asked-questions-regarding-restrictions-lobbying</a>
Frequently Asked Questions on Partisan Political Activity	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/frequently-asked-questions-regarding-restrictions-partisan-political-activity">https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/frequently-asked-questions-regarding-restrictions-partisan-political-activity</a>
Terms and Conditions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Grant Terms and Conditions and Certifications & Assurances	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Appendix A.2	<a href="#">Primer on Civil Rights Compliance</a>
	<b>Chapter 3</b>
Grantee and Sponsors resource page	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors</a>
AmeriCorps’s national performance measures	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement</a>
Appendix A.13	<a href="#">Sample Data Sharing Agreement</a>
Evidence Exchange	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange">https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange</a>
FGP Grantee page: NOF0, Application, and Application App B	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Appendix A.11	<a href="#">Evidence-Based Programs and Registries</a>
	<b>Chapter 4</b>
Building an Effective Advisory Council	<a href="http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/factsheet21.pdf">http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/factsheet21.pdf</a>
Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/senior-corps/understanding-roles-and-responsibilities-advisory-councils">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/senior-corps/understanding-roles-and-responsibilities-advisory-councils</a>
	<b>Chapter 5</b>
National Service Criminal History Checks Resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check</a>
Senior Community Service Employment Program	<a href="https://doleta.gov/Seniors/html_docs/PYdirectory.cfm">https://doleta.gov/Seniors/html_docs/PYdirectory.cfm</a>
	<b>Chapter 6</b>
AmeriCorps Superintendent’s/Principal’s Toolkit	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/education/superintendentsprincipals-toolkit">https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/education/superintendentsprincipals-toolkit</a>
Appendix A.12	<a href="#">Guidance on Prohibition on Fee-for-Service</a>
FGP grantee webpage for Station Roster Instructions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 13: AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index*

Non-Displacement of Employed Workers 45 CFR 1216.1.1 – 1216.1.4	<a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt45.4.1216&amp;rgn=div5">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt45.4.1216&amp;rgn=div5</a>
Appendix C.10	<a href="#">Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments</a>
Appendix C.1	<a href="#">Memorandum of Understanding</a>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	
Grantee and Sponsor	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors</a>
Appendix D.1	<a href="#">FGP Sample Volunteer Assignment Description</a>
Appendix C.10	<a href="#">Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments</a>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	
All for Good	<a href="https://www.allforgood.org/">https://www.allforgood.org/</a>
National Service Criminal History Checks Resources	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check</a>
National Sex Offender Public Website	<a href="http://www.nsopw.gov">www.nsopw.gov</a>
Staff Screening Tool Kit	<a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/r3300-staff-screening-tool-kit.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/r3300-staff-screening-tool-kit.pdf</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingchildsexualabuse-a.pdf">https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingchildsexualabuse-a.pdf</a>
Adult Learning Toolkit	<a href="http://www.nwcphp.org/training/effective-adult-learning-a-toolkit-for-teaching-adults">http://www.nwcphp.org/training/effective-adult-learning-a-toolkit-for-teaching-adults</a>
Facilitating Adult Learning	<a href="http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating_Adult_Learning.pdf">http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating_Adult_Learning.pdf</a>
Appendix C.2	<a href="#">Sample Volunteer Enrollment Form</a>
Appendix C.5	<a href="#">Sample Volunteer Information Update Form</a>
<b>Chapter 9</b>	
Appendix A.10	<a href="#">AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Coverage Requirements</a>
Appendix A.1	<a href="#">Guidance for Recognition Costs</a>
Appendix C.3	<a href="#">Sample FGP Timesheet and Mileage Request</a>
<b>Chapter 10</b>	
Chapter 10 References to 2 CFR:	Link to the 2 CFR which is also called the Uniform Guidance.
2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.300 to 200.345	<a href="http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=b9a3c6bc45dc33da0b90c5da0844bfeb&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt2.1.200">http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=b9a3c6bc45dc33da0b90c5da0844bfeb&amp;mc=true&amp;node=pt2.1.200</a>
2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.500 – 200.520	
2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.400 to 200.475	
2 CFR § 200.430 Compensation – personal services	

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 13: AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index*

2 CFR Chapter II Subpart D Section 200.306 Cost Sharing or Matching	
2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section 200.305	
OMB Post Federal Award Requirements	
OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements	
OMB Cost Principles	
OMB Budget Guidance Audit Requirements	
States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals	
Audits	<a href="http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAmeriCorps/bulletins/1373ea5">http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAmeriCorps/bulletins/1373ea5</a>
Cost Principles	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance</a>
Federal Audit Clearinghouse	<a href="https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/Default.aspx">https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/Default.aspx</a>
Indirect Costs: Rate Agreements and Cost Allocation Principles	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance</a>
Key Concepts of Financial Management	<a href="https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/?C=335756">https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/?C=335756</a>
PMS-Help and training for grantees using the Payment Management System	<a href="https://pms.psc.gov/">https://pms.psc.gov/</a>
PMS login - SMARTLINK	<a href="https://pms.psc.gov/">https://pms.psc.gov/</a>
PMS- PSC 272 Report Instructions	<a href="https://pms.psc.gov/pms-user-guide/federal-cash-transaction-report.html">https://pms.psc.gov/pms-user-guide/federal-cash-transaction-report.html</a>
FGP Grant Application (FGP grantee webpage)	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996	<a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-policies/single-audit-act-amendments-1996.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-policies/single-audit-act-amendments-1996.html</a>
Terms and Conditions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Uniform Administrative Requirements (Uniform Guidance)	<a href="https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance">https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance</a>
<b>Chapter 11</b>	
FFR Instructions and Sample Form	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/federal-financial-report-ffr">http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/federal-financial-report-ffr</a>
FGP grantee webpage - Progress Report Instructions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
National Service Criminal History Check	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check</a>
National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)	<a href="http://www.nsopw.gov">www.nsopw.gov</a>
PMS -Payment Management System	<a href="https://pms.psc.gov/">https://pms.psc.gov/</a>
PMS - Frequently Asked Questions	<a href="https://dpm-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=DPM">https://dpm-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=DPM</a>

*AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program Operations Handbook Chapter 13: AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Handbook Cross Reference Index*

Terms and Conditions	<a href="https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp">https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/fgp</a>
Tutorial: Valuing, Documenting, and Recording In-Kind Match	<a href="http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/fm_key_concepts_of_cash_and_in_kind_match/view5f46.html?id=3213&amp;chapterid=2270">http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/fm_key_concepts_of_cash_and_in_kind_match/view5f46.html?id=3213&amp;chapterid=2270</a>
Appendix C.3	<a href="#">Sample FGP Timesheet with Mileage Request</a>
Appendix A.3	<a href="#">Guidance for Closing-Out Your AmeriCorps Grant</a>
Appendix A.6	<a href="#">Volunteer Tracking Software Distributors</a>
Appendix A.14	<a href="#">Sample In-Kind Contribution Form</a>
<b>Chapter 12</b>	
National Days of Service and Special Initiatives:	<a href="https://americorps.gov/join">https://americorps.gov/join</a>
Media kit materials	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources">https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources</a>
Public relations materials	<a href="https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources">https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources</a>



## **14 Description and List of Appendices**

In the January 2017 revision of these handbooks, AmeriCorps Seniors revised the organization of the handbook appendices to clarify when appendices were the same across workbooks and improve our ability to update them quickly and accurately. Specifically, we combined the appendices of all three AmeriCorps Seniors handbooks (the Foster Grandparent Operations Handbook, Senior Companion Operations Handbook and RSVP Operations Handbook) into one list.

You can access appendices in both PDF below and, when applicable, editable Word or Excel formats on the AmeriCorps Seniors [Foster Grandparent grantees webpage](#).

In addition, we introduced a numbering system to indicate what appendices would be relevant for what programs. The appendices are organized as follows:

- Section A: These appendices apply equally to all AmeriCorps Seniors programs.
- Section B: These appendices apply only to the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program.
- Section C: These appendices apply equally to the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs
- Section D: These appendices apply only to the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program
- Section E: These appendices apply only to the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program
- Section F: These appendices apply only to the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Demonstration Program

In the printable version of this handbook, we have included only the appendices that are relevant to your program. A full list of the appendices included in this document follows.

### **SECTION A: ALL PROGRAMS**

- A.1. [Guidance on Recognition Costs](#)
- A.2. [Primer on Civil Rights Compliance](#)
- A.3. [Guidance on Closing Out Your AmeriCorps Grant](#)
- A.4. [AmeriCorps Seniors Progress Report Tips](#)
- A.5. [Quick Reference Guide for AmeriCorps Seniors Reports and Due Dates](#)
- A.6. [Volunteer Tracking Software Distributors](#)
- A.7. [Acronyms Related to AmeriCorps](#)
- A.8. [Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants](#)
- A.9. [Optional Checklist for Station Accessibility](#)
- A.10. [AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Coverage Requirements](#)
- A.11. [Evidence-Based Programs and Registries](#)
- A.12. [Guidance on Fee-for-Service Prohibition](#)
- A.13. [Sample Data Sharing Agreement](#)
- A.14. [Sample In-Kind Contribution Form](#)
- A.15. [FY 2025 Final Rule Overview](#)
- A.16. [Technology Support Training](#)
- A.17. [Respite Survey](#)
- A.18. [Independent Living Survey](#)
- A.19. [Disaster and Emergency Response](#)
- A.20. [Review and Update Project Information in eGrants](#)
- A.21. [Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils](#)

**SECTION C: AMERICORPS SENIORS FOSTER GRANDPARENT AND SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAMS**

- C.1. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- C.2. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer Enrollment Form](#)
- C.3. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Timesheet and Mileage Form](#)
- C.4. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Project Director Job Description](#)
- C.5. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer Information Update Form](#)
- C.6. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Income Review Form](#)
- C.7. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Enrollment Checklist](#)
- C.8. [Sample VSY Worksheet](#)
- C.9. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer File Checklist](#)
- C.10. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments](#)
- C.11. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP TB Test Form](#)
- C.12. [Sample FGP-AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Physical Form](#)
- C.13. [Guidance on Social Security Disability](#)
- C.14. [Guidance on Accrued Unused and Recognition Leave for SCP & FGP Volunteers](#)

**Section D: AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Programs Only**

- D.1. [Sample AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer in FGP Assignment Plan](#)
- D.2. [Sample Foster Grandparent Position Descriptions](#)
- D.3. [Previous Change Logs](#)

## Appendix A.1 - Guidance on Recognition Costs

From the AmeriCorps Office of Grant Administration (OGA)

### OVERVIEW

Recognition, a direct benefit to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, is a cost category allowed AmeriCorps Seniors [as of Sept. 2020, CNCS and Senior Corp are still the legal name, but do business as AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors, respectfully] regulations (45 CFR 2551.46(e), 45 CFR 2552.46(e), 45 CFR 2553.43(c)). It covers a wide range of potential costs. Any costs charged to this direct benefit to the volunteer must be in accordance with the applicable OMB cost principles (2 CFR 200, Subpart E) and expended using sound business practices. Any costs charged to recognition should be reasonable and prudent, properly valued and consistent with your organizational accounting practices. Consideration should also be given to the appropriateness of the expenditure.

### CRITERIA

- Recognition should be related to the volunteer's service.
- Recognition costs should have appropriate limits. Things to consider are budgetary limits and organizational policies on reasonableness of costs. If your organization does not have a policy on reasonableness of costs, one should be developed by your management and/or accounting department.
- Recognition should be applied equally among all volunteers. If there are limited resources some method should be devised to ensure all volunteers are included in recognition activities and actions. Planning for distribution of limited resources should be accomplished at the time of your budgetary planning and included in your organizational policies and procedures.
- Recognition should be program specific and recognize the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer for their service in the AmeriCorps designated project.
- Recognition should not include any costs to the volunteer.
- Recognition should take place at least annually for formal public recognition of volunteers to the community. If formal recognition takes place, a sign-in sheet documenting attendance of the volunteers being recognized should be prepared.

### ITEMS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS RECOGNITION EXPENSES

- Special ceremonies, teas, breakfasts, luncheons, and recreational outings can also include a per person cost which includes items other than room rental and food. If the cost per attendee includes other amenities in an inclusive package this is acceptable so long as:
  - The cost is reasonable
  - There is budgetary availability
  - The expenses are not expressly prohibited by either the OMB cost principles or a determination by an AmeriCorps Official.
- Small (nominal value) gifts are allowable:
  - So long as:
    - The cost is reasonable
    - There is budgetary availability
    - The gift is not something that is expressly prohibited by either OMB cost principles or by a determination by an AmeriCorps Official.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.1 - Guidance on Recognition Costs

- A gift is any item that has monetary value.
- Your organization should establish policies on how you determine reasonableness of cost and determine limits based on sound accounting practices.
  - AmeriCorps would define the value of a gift using “Market Value.” Market value means the retail cost the organization would incur to purchase the gift.
  - An organization who cannot ascertain the market value of a gift may estimate its market value by reference to the retail cost of similar items of like quality.
  - For example: The market value of a gift of a ticket entitling the holder to food, refreshments, entertainment, or any other benefit would be the face value of the ticket.
- Recognition items such as trophies, plaques, certificates, and pins are acceptable. Attention should be given to the fact that the cost of some of these items will increase depending on the cost of engraving, sometimes significantly, so these recognition items may be limited to budget availability.
- Birthday cards are acceptable, even though they are not technically a recognition item related to a volunteer’s service. They are of a nominal value and therefore can be used as a form of recognition.
- AmeriCorps Seniors encourages grantees to invite special guest, elected or other officials to show appreciation to the volunteers. Costs for these special guests can be paid for from grant funds.
- Gifts cards are acceptable forms of recognition. It is important that these should be treated as cash in your accounting system, however, they do not take the form of a cash payment and are not as liquid.
  - Because anyone can use a gift card, they should be treated as cash and documented in accordance with sound business practices, including a receipt signed by the volunteer being recognized.
  - Refer to 45 CFR 2543.21 for Standards for Financial Management Systems. Gift Cards are usually designated for a specific purpose and a specific item. Organizations should have a policy and procedure in place to account for the distributions and accounting of gift card.
- Additional leave may be used as a form of recognition. AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs that intend to use leave as a form of recognition must also abide by the AmeriCorps Seniors Guidance on Leave as a Form of Volunteer Recognition.

### ITEMS GENERALLY NOT ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF RECOGNITION

- Holiday or Christmas gifts are not acceptable. Recognition should be based on a volunteer’s service only.
- Cash is not acceptable as recognition. Cash can be seen as a payment or a bonus and volunteers serving in AmeriCorps programs are not to be paid other than the allowable stipend payments in the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent / Senior Companion programs.
- Paid speakers at recognition events are usually not allowable, although exceptions may be permitted. Some things to consider are:
  - Would the event still be a success if the speaker does not attend? Is the speaker an integral and vital component to the success of the event?
  - Would your organization pay for the speaker or raise money to include the speaker if federal funds were not available?
  - Can you substitute the speaker for someone without a speaking fee but with similar ability and qualifications?
- Guests of volunteers are not permitted to be paid for from federal or non-federal expenditures. If volunteers bring guests, the sources of funds to be used should come from a source not counted

## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.1 - Guidance on Recognition Costs**

toward your required match. A best practice is to have a sign in sheet for all attendees present at the recognition event.

- Certain forms of entertainment are not acceptable. If you are planning to expend funds for recognition, please consult with an AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager prior to expenditure for further clarification.

### **ITEMS THAT ARE QUESTIONABLE AND WOULD NEED PRIOR APPROVAL FROM AMERICORPS**

- Tickets to events in normal instances would be deemed unallowable based on the OMB Cost Principles which state “Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable.”
- However, since our regulations do view recognition as a legitimate cost, showing recognition in the form of tickets to events may be deemed appropriate based on reasonableness of cost and appropriateness of the venue. These types of costs should be discussed with your AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager prior to expenditure.

### **SPECIAL VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

- Singling out a volunteer for exceptional or special service is allowable. Examples include acknowledging a milestone in service (example: 20 years of service, 30 years of service) or supporting a program in ways that go beyond service activities, such as efforts to recruit other volunteers.
- Special recognition items can be given for this purpose if the following is demonstrated:
  - The cost is reasonable
  - There is budgetary availability
  - The gift is not something that is expressly prohibited by either OMB cost principles or by a determination by an AmeriCorps Official.
- When recognizing individual volunteers, an organization should have a written policy that includes:
  - What constitutes exceptional or special service
  - What milestones or achievements in service will prompt special recognition
  - What will be given for this purpose if different than typical recognition awards.

## Appendix A.2 - Primer on Civil Rights Compliance

Civil rights laws are complex, and **neither direct evidence of discrimination nor direct proof of intent to discriminate is needed for discrimination to be found.** Therefore, past actions -- e.g., patterns in decisions, statements made in any contexts, or rules followed/not followed -- or actions taken regarding other persons -- e.g., sent to training, given warning in lieu of a reprimand or termination -- may determine the outcome of a claim of discrimination, even if the past action appears to have no relationship to a present discrimination claim.

### Definition of Discrimination

**Dictionary Definition:** Different treatment

**Legal Definition:** Different treatment **because of** a difference in race; color; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; religion; age; disability; political affiliation; marital or parental status; or military service.

**Regulatory Expansion:** Different treatment **because of** reprisal for: (a) participation in the discrimination complaint process, or (b) expressing opposition to an action made illegal by the civil rights acts or other applicable laws.

### Determination of Discrimination

When direct, straightforward evidence of discrimination exists, it is relatively easy to determine whether legally discrimination occurred. Such evidence could include:

- Racial epithets, sexual slurs, repeated jokes about accent or heritage.
- A recruitment brochure which describes a job as "Fit for a Queen," or a recruitment poster asks, "Are you the right man?"
- Interview notes read "too old for this job" or qualification requirements call for "trainee between the ages of 21 and 24."

Such evidence is not needed, however, for discrimination under the law to have occurred. Discrimination may be inferred when two persons of different race, sex, etc. groups receive different treatment. Different treatment is determined by comparing persons who are **similarly situated**, i.e., they are so situated that it is reasonable to expect they would receive the same treatment in the context of a particular employment or service decision.

The determination as to whether an action was **because of** race, sex, etc., uses the following disparate treatment analytical model:

**Step One: Complainant** must establish a "prima facie" case of discrimination, i.e., establish enough so that the case is not immediately dismissed, and the employer or grantee must respond to the allegation(s). This establishes a rebuttable presumption of discrimination. Often comparative evidence is presented that a similarly situated person of another race, sex, etc. group was treated more favorably than the complainant. That is, the complainant was treated less favorably than a person who is so situated that it is reasonable to expect he or she would receive the same treatment in terms of a particular employment or service decision.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.2 - Primer on Civil Rights Compliance

If the complainant establishes a prima facie case, the employer's or grantee's response is examined. If the complainant does not do so, a finding of no discrimination must be made.

**Step Two: The employer or grantee must set forth a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason** for its action. If the employer or grantee does this, pretext is examined. If employer or grantee does not do so, a finding of discrimination must be made.

**Step Three: The complainant** must establish the employer's or grantee's stated reason is pretext for prohibited discrimination, i.e., stated reason is not credible or it masks/cloaks the real reason which is prohibited discrimination. If the complainant establishes pretext, a finding of discrimination must be made. If the complainant does not do so, a finding of no discrimination must be made.

### Burden of Proof

Generally, the **complainant carries the burden of proof** and must establish his or her case by a **preponderance of the evidence**, i.e., if evidence is a football field, complainant must carry the ball over the 50-yard line, into the employer's territory.

**Exception One: Direct, straightforward evidence of discrimination** shifts burden of proof to the employer or grantee, who must prove it did not discriminate by clear and convincing evidence (a much higher standard than preponderance of the evidence)

**Exception Two:** Mixed motive cases (both discriminatory and nondiscriminatory motives established). The employer or grantee must prove, by the higher level clear and convincing evidence, that, absent discrimination, the same action would have occurred (e.g., same person would have been selected); if the employer or grantee meets its burden of proof, it is still liable for discrimination, but relief is limited to declaratory relief, certain injunctive relief, and attorney's fees and costs (relief may not include personal relief such as retroactive hiring, reinstatement, and compensatory damages).

### Interview Questions

Interview or application questions (i.e., questions during the selection process) which are not directly job or position-related are oftentimes considered direct evidence of discrimination. (There is no problem requesting necessary information **after** the selection process is complete, however.)

At a minimum, to protect from liability, it is **always** advisable to avoid certain types of questions during the selection process. If a manager does not have information available during the selection process, the manager will **always** be able to legitimately state that the selection was not based on that information.

Non job- or position-related questions, i.e., questions that do not directly address the applicant's ability to perform the essential duties of the position, include the following:

- **Questions related to marital status** (also preferred forms of address).
- **Questions related to children** (also ages of children and child care arrangements made or needed) or to pregnancy and/or reproduction (including future family planning).
- **Questions related to the ability to work overtime or to travel** (with reference to dependents or family life). When overtime and/or travel are duties of the position, it is acceptable, however, to describe duties and ask if applicant foresees any problem in fulfilling the duties.
- **Questions related to disability or medical conditions** (including questions on nature or origin

of a disability, commuting arrangements, sick leave usage, or ability to perform marginal duties of the position).

### **Special Requirements Related to Disability or Medical Conditions**

**General Rule:** The employer or grantee **may not** conduct a pre-employment or pre-service medical examination or ask applicant prior to employment or service **whether he or she has disabilities or question the nature or severity of a disability.**

### **Essential Functions**

The employer or grantee may, however, make pre-employment or pre-service inquiry into applicant's ability to meet the *essential functions* of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation, or to fulfill bona fide medical qualification requirements, if applicable.

Essential functions are the minimum abilities necessary for safe and efficient performance of the duties of the position in question.

Care must be exercised, however, in inquiring about the ability to perform essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, because a selection decision may not generally consider whether an accommodation is required or how much it will cost. That is, unless an accommodation constitutes an undue financial or administrative burden or fundamentally alters the nature of the program or activity, the need for or cost of an accommodation may not influence a selection decision.

It is acceptable to exclude an applicant with a disability, even though the person can perform the essential functions of the position, only if the disability endangers the health and safety of others or if performing the essential functions endangers the health and safety of the applicant.

Persons with contagious diseases (e.g., tuberculosis) in remission may not be passed over for selection based on their disability if they can perform the essential functions of the position. Further, all HIV-positive persons are persons with disabilities, and not selecting an applicant solely on the basis of this illness is discrimination.

### **Medical Examinations**

Nothing prohibits employer or grantee from conditioning offer of employment or service on results of a medical examination conducted prior to person's entrance on duty, **provided all entering persons are subjected to such an examination regardless of disability** and results of such an examination are used only in accordance with these guidelines.

### **Records Maintenance**

Information concerning the medical condition or history of applicants must be collected and maintained on separate forms that are treated as confidential medical records, except that:

- Supervisors and managers may be informed regarding restrictions on duties of disabled persons and necessary accommodations;
- First aid and safety personnel may be informed if the condition might require emergency treatment;
- Government officials investigating compliance with laws, regulations, and instructions relevant to equal opportunity must be provided information upon request; and
- Statistics generated from information obtained may be used to manage, evaluate, and report on equal opportunity.



## **Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation**

### **General Rules:**

1. No qualified individual with disabilities shall, on the basis of disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
2. All programs and activities must be accessible to, and usable by, persons with disabilities.
3. Persons with disabilities shall be provided reasonable accommodation to participate in the program or activity.

**Statutes:** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits disability discrimination in federally assisted programs. The AmeriCorps is responsible for enforcing this provision in terms of its grantees and subgrantees. *(For civil rights purposes, all programs, projects, and sites funded or receiving volunteers or service members under AmeriCorps statutes are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.)*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to virtually all AmeriCorps grantees and subgrantees, but the AmeriCorps does not enforce it. The ADA's nondiscrimination, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation standards for state and local governments are identical to Section 504 standards. Public places like museums, day care centers, schools, have lower accessibility and reasonable accommodation standards under the ADA (and religious institutions are exempt), but by virtue of receiving federal financial assistance, the higher Section 504 standards apply to them.

**New construction and alterations (built or altered since May 30, 1979):** Each building or part of a building that is constructed or altered by or for the use of any grantee or subgrantee shall be designed, constructed, or altered so as to be readily accessible to and usable by disabled persons.

**Existing facilities (built before May 30, 1979):** Grantees must operate each program or activity so that, when viewed in its entirety, it is readily accessible to and usable by disabled persons. For this purpose, a project plus all sites is considered. Grantees are not necessarily required to retrofit to make each existing facility accessible or to take action that would result in undue financial or administrative burdens, but the overall program must be accessible. Programmatic modifications are acceptable to achieve and maintain accessibility in buildings built before May 30, 1979.

**Communications:** Grantees must ensure program and employment communications are available to persons with impaired vision and hearing, and that no disabled person is denied benefits or participation because no auxiliary aids were provided for persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

### **Sexual Harassment**

**Definition:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or service.
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or volunteer or participation decisions affecting the individual.
- c. Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably

interfering with an individual's work or service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or service environment.

**The Key is That the Conduct is Unwelcome.**

**Examples:** Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following work or service conduct:

- (1) Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors in return for job or service benefits.
- (2) Unwelcome letters, telephone calls, or distribution or display of materials of a sexual nature.
- (3) Physical assaults of a sexual nature.
- (4) Unwelcome and deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching.
- (5) Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures.
- (6) Unwelcome pressure for sexual favors or dates.
- (7) Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions.
- (8) According favorable treatment to those who grant sexual favors.

**Relationships vis-à-vis Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is not limited to prohibited conduct by a male toward a female or by a supervisor toward a subordinate. It includes prohibited conduct by a AmeriCorps employee towards a volunteer, service member, project director, or program beneficiary, as well as such conduct by grantee employees.

- A man may be the victim of sexual harassment.
- A woman may be the harasser.
- The victim does not have to be the opposite sex from the harasser.
- The harasser does not have to be the victim's supervisor. The harasser could be:
  - a supervisor who does not supervise the victim,
  - a non-supervisory employee, volunteer, or service member, or
  - a co-worker or another volunteer or service member.
- The victim does not have to be the person toward whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed, but may be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person.

For example, the sexual harassment of an employee, volunteer, or service member may create for another employee, volunteer or service member an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.2 - Primer on Civil Rights Compliance

- Sexual harassment does not depend on the victim's having suffered an economic loss as a result of the harasser's conduct.

For example, improper sexual advances which do not result in the denial of a promotion or the discharge of the victim may, nonetheless, constitute sexual harassment where they interfere with the victim's work or service, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or service environment.

**Harassment on sexual, racial, national origin, religious harassment**, or on any other grounds is strictly prohibited in AmeriCorps or grantee offices, other work- or service-related settings, including, but not limited to site visits or work- or service-related social events and training.

### AmeriCorps or Grantee Responsibilities Regarding Harassment

AmeriCorps or grantee is ultimately responsible for violations of prohibitions against any form of prohibited harassment and for taking corrective action and/or disciplinary action if violations occur. They are responsible for:

- (1) **Acts of "quid pro quo" sexual harassment**, wherein a supervisor demands sexual favors for employment or service benefits, regardless of whether AmeriCorps or grantee, its agents or supervisory employees knew, or should have known, of the acts.
- (2) **Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or service environment**, where AmeriCorps or grantee, its agents or supervisory employees knew, or had reason to know, of acts and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.
- (3) **Acts of prohibited harassment toward fellow employees, volunteers, or participants (co-workers)**, where AmeriCorps or grantee, its agents or its supervisory employees knew, or should have known, of the conduct, unless it took immediate and appropriate corrective action.
- (4) **Acts of prohibited harassment by non-employees**, where AmeriCorps or grantee, its agents or its supervisory employees knew, or should have known, of the conduct and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.

### Discrimination Claims

Any volunteer, service member, client, employee, or beneficiary of a program or project who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination in violation of nondiscrimination provisions of applicable laws, regulations or this policy may raise a claim with AmeriCorps's Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness (OCRI). However, discrimination claims not brought to the attention of the OCRI Office within 45 days of their occurrence of the alleged discriminatory event may not be accepted in a formal complaint of discrimination and may be procedurally dismissed.

We first attempt to resolve discrimination claims through the informal counseling process. In addition, although people are not required to do so, we encourage people to try first to resolve discrimination claims directly with programs and projects, and most service members may use their grievance system to do so. However, raising matters through a program or project grievance system does not stop the running of the 45-day time frame.

## **AmeriCorps's Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness**

AmeriCorps's Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness (OCRI) is available to provide further information to any AmeriCorps or grantee official, volunteer, or service member. The OCRI may be reached at (202) 606-7503, (voice), (202) 606-5256 (TDD), [eo@americorps.gov](mailto:eo@americorps.gov), or through <http://www.americorps.gov>.

### **Civil Rights Compliance Evaluation during Site and Monitoring Visits**

The following is designed to allow evaluation of civil rights compliance during any type of on-site visit. Most items can be observed during the regular course of a visit, thereby taking no additional time or effort.

1. Is there a flat, non-gravel route from parking/street through the front entrance? Does the parking lot have spaces reserved for persons with disabilities?
2. Are doors (entrance, rest room, etc.) no heavier to open than refrigerator door? Are door knobs throughout push/pull or lever-type, not twist knobs?
3. Are halls and passageways at least one yard wide? Are they level, with non-slip, stable surfaces and no trip hazards?
4. Are there no steps without alternate routes (elevators, ramps, other entrance) available?
  - a. Are stairs of uniform heights?
5. Do publicity information, brochures, handbooks, etc. state they are available in alternate formats upon request and do they identify how to request formats?
6. If eyes are closed or sound turned down during a video or PSA, do you still receive the message?
7. Is there adequate maneuvering clearance at entrances, especially rest rooms?
8. Does an accessible restroom have an accessible stall 5' x 5'? (There are other legal configurations, but check to see if a person in a wheelchair can close the door)
9. Does an accessible restroom have a sink with lever faucets, hot water pipes wrapped to prevent burns, and paper towels lowered?
10. Are emergency alarms both audible and visual? Are evacuation plans and areas of rescue assistance accessible to individuals with mobility impairments?
11. Is there a non-discrimination policy statement that applies to services provided by the site, and addresses nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, and political affiliation? Have they received any claims or complaints of prohibited discrimination?
12. Are there any policies, procedures, or technology which excludes, directly or indirectly, a person with (a) mobility impairments, (b) visual impairments, (c) hearing impairments, (d) mental or emotional impairments, or (e) diseases (including HIV but excluding currently contagious diseases) or addictions (other than current illegal drug use, or current alcohol or legal drug abuse which prevents performing duties or is a direct and current threat to self or others)?

## Appendix A.3 - Guidance on Closing-Out Your AmeriCorps Seniors Grant

From the Office of Grant Administration (OGA)

In order to close-out an AmeriCorps Seniors Grant, AmeriCorps Seniors requires the following four items. 1. A final FFR (Federal Financial Report) with AmeriCorps Seniors, 2. Cash Transaction Report with PMS (Payment Management System), 3. Inventory Report (if required), 4. Final PPR with AmeriCorps Seniors. These documents should be completed and returned to AmeriCorps no later than 90 days after the grant expiration date.

1. A final Federal Financial Report (FFR) in the AmeriCorps electronic grants system. This must show that the required match was met and the Total Federal Share of expenditures must match the total drawdowns from PMS. If the final PMS drawdown has not been completed, please wait to file the AmeriCorps Seniors FFR, until the final amount has been confirmed. If there are leftover AmeriCorps Seniors funds, these should be indicated on the FFR (unobligated balance of federal funds) and will be de-obligated during the close-out process. Please note there cannot be any “unliquidated obligations” listed on a final FFR. Please contact your Portfolio Manager if you have questions about this report.
2. A Federal Cash Transaction Report must be submitted in the Payment Management System (PMS). This can only be done during the open periods for filing (January, April, July, and October). Please ensure the final drawdown of AmeriCorps Seniors funds from PMS is completed as soon as possible.
  - a. Example: Your grant ends March 31, the final drawdown in PMS should be done before June 30, so it can be accounted for during the July open reporting period that covers April, May and June. If the final drawdown is not completed until July, those funds cannot be reported until October. This will make the close-out late and could result in a hold being placed on your current grant funds.

In order to close-out the grant, the amount drawn from PMS must match the amount disbursed (on the cash transaction report) in PMS, to the penny. If \$365,002.65 was drawn down, then \$365,002.65 must be disbursed and \$365,002.65 must be the Total Federal Share of Expenditures reported on the AmeriCorps Seniors FFR. For assistance with PMS, please contact the help desk at 1-877-614-5533 or [PMSSupport@psc.gov](mailto:PMSSupport@psc.gov).

3. In the event that you have more than \$5,000 in supplies left over from the grant, you must notify your grants officer.

A final Program Progress Report (PPR) must also be submitted, please contact your Portfolio Manager if you have questions about this report.

## Appendix A.4 – AmeriCorps Seniors Progress Report Tips

This document is provided as a guide for AmeriCorps Seniors grantees. **It is not intended to replace the Progress Report Instructions** that are posted on the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page.

Some information you share in your reports may fit in more than one narrative. Select where you think it fits best. It is not necessary to repeat information in more than one section.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Tips</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p><b>Enter any challenges you or your volunteers experienced in the reporting period and how they were addressed. Let your portfolio manager know if you need assistance. Describe any new challenges affecting your project during the reporting period.</b></p> <p><b>You might consider highlighting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Plans/Performance Measurement Challenges/Issues</li> <li>• Station Development</li> <li>• Volunteer Recruitment/volunteer hours</li> </ul> <p><i>Do not wait for the progress report if you need support from your portfolio manager.</i></p>
<b>Partnership/ Collaboration Development</b>	<p><b>Partnerships and community collaborations are a big part of your project. Share news about partnerships developed and how the partnership will result in better serving your beneficiaries, or otherwise reaching project goals. Describe efforts to develop partnerships or collaborations with volunteer stations. Include efforts to develop new stations as well as efforts to garner support (data collection, volunteer training, etc.) from existing stations.</b></p> <p><b>You might consider also highlighting things like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships with other AmeriCorps programs or national service members.</li> <li>• Collaboration connected to National Days of Service or local service activities/events.</li> <li>• Collaboration with local philanthropic organizations, business leaders, other non-profits. Highlight roles, responsibilities and outcomes of partnership.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Federal Share Development</b>	<p><b>Describe efforts to meet the non-federal share requirement for your project. Include both cash and in-kind resource development that occurred during this reporting period.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have received notice of funding awards, please describe the dollar value, name of funder, and <i>purpose of the funding</i>.</li> <li>• Submit the award letter as an attachment.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Accomplishments</b>	<p><b>Use this section to report on accomplishments other than those already reported in the Project Plan or previous narratives. Describe any significant project accomplishments other than your work plan progress that you will report in this PPR.</b></p> <p><b>You might consider also highlighting things like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact data that is not reported in the performance measurement work plan.</li> <li>• Policies, systems or status updates pertaining to AmeriCorps Seniors regulations:</li> <li>• AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Annual Safety Check Status</li> </ul>

**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.4 - AmeriCorps Seniors Progress Report Tips**

<i>Section</i>	<b>Tips</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AmeriCorps Seniors (FGP/SCP/RSVP) Accessibility Evaluation/Survey Results</li> <li>• Update to AmeriCorps Seniors program policies or procedures (ex. mileage rates, leave policy, handbooks)</li> <li>• Annual volunteer recognition activity</li> <li>• Advisory Board/Community Assessments Events or activities in which <b>public officials</b> participate.</li> <li>• Social media outreach</li> <li>• Recruitment successes</li> </ul>
<b><i>Impact Stories</i></b>	<p><b>Share stories that are not reported in the project plan and other data. Brief stories that communicate to the public how your program or volunteers “get things done” in your community are best, particularly those that include impact or results.</b></p> <p>It is helpful if Impact Stories are built using the following template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested length for stories: 75-200 words</li> <li>• Volunteer’s Name</li> <li>• Name of Sponsor, location (City/State) of project</li> <li>• Brief statement of accomplishment</li> <li>• Include statistics, numbers, etc. that demonstrate impact</li> </ul> <p>Portfolio Manager encourage project directors to submit impact stories directly to them between progress reports. Portfolio Manager share your grantee stories on the monthly cluster report. The same stories can be included in this PPR report.</p>
<b><i>List of Additional Documents submitted to AmeriCorps</i></b>	<p><b>Documents cannot be attached in the electronic grants management system, so it is helpful if you include links to items or a list of items emailed to your portfolio manager in this section.</b></p> <p>Suggested additional documents could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of community input (advisory council agenda’s, community meeting agenda, etc.)</li> <li>• Updated or adjusted project forms (timesheets, MOU, Volunteer Mileage Forms, etc.)</li> <li>• PR             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local media</li> <li>○ News articles</li> <li>○ Feature in the agency or project newsletter</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Volunteer Recognition             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thank You letters</li> <li>○ Recognition speeches/comments from Public Officials</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Demonstration of Impact</p>

## **Checklist for Completing Progress**

### **Reports General tips**

- Keep good records during the year
- Schedule plenty of time to write reports
- Organize all documents needed for the report before getting started
- Do not leave anything blank (“NA” stands for “not acceptable”)

### **Some best practices for reporting in the Performance Measure section:**

- Remember that clear, concise work plans in the grant application is the key to good, simple reporting
- Keep reporting aligned with original work plans
- If you have not fully reached a project milestone, report on the progress to date
- Include statistics in reports, not just descriptions
- Include real numbers with percentages. For example, say “75% of respondents (45 out of 60)” instead of only “75% of respondents”

### **Some best practices for reporting in the Narrative section:**

- Challenges:** What are you doing to address challenges? Do not wait for the progress report if you need support from your portfolio manager.
- Training/technical assistance needs:** What are the training and technical assistance needs of your project?
- Partnership/Collaboration development:** In addition to listing new partnerships, describe how activities with partners relate to achieving project goals
- Non-federal share development:** If the resource leveraged is an in-kind donation, has it been documented in compliance with federal regulation?
- Other accomplishments:** Provide specific information
  - Example- Training Events: Describe how many participants were involved, what the training covered, and who conducted the training.
- Do not wait until progress report is due to notify the Portfolio Manager of major accomplishments



## Appendix A.5 – Quick Reference Chart for AmeriCorps Seniors Reports and Due Dates

The Notice of Grant Award (NGA) is the project sponsors’ official notification of reporting requirements, due dates, and any special conditions (requirements) of the grant. **Check your NGA, including the Terms and Conditions to verify your due dates and any special conditions** on the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page.

Report	Due Date	Where to
<b>SF424- Grant Application (New, Renewal or Continuation)</b>	Due date is given in AmeriCorps Seniors Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) for renewals or competitions, and continuations. Generally due about 9-10 weeks before your grant end date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management system</b></li> <li>• <b>Required Documents-</b></li> </ul>
<b>Progress Report</b>	Grantees must prepare the <b>Progress Report-Annual</b> at the end of the budget period. Grantees will complete the <b>Progress Report Semi-Annual- Lite</b> halfway through the budget year. Reports must be submitted in the electronic grants management system no later than 30 days after the end of the designated reporting period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management system</b></li> </ul>
<b>Progress Report Supplement (PRS):</b>	Due date is announced in October-December, the first quarter of the Federal Fiscal Year. The reporting period is October 1 through September 30, the prior federal fiscal year. This report was formerly referred to as the PPVA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management system</b></li> </ul>
<b>FFR: Federal Financial Report to AmeriCorps</b>	30 days after the first, and each consecutive 6-month reporting period based on your grant period. See below for Final FFR. Data is cumulative for the 3-year grant period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management system</b></li> </ul>
<b>FFR - Final</b>	90 after the end of year 3 of the grant performance period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management</b></li> </ul>
<b>(HHS PMS) FFR – Cash Transactions Report SF 272</b>	For disbursement activity during the months of: The FFR is due on: April 01 through June 30 - 3rd Qtr. July 30 July 01 through September 30 - 4th Qtr. October 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HHS/PMS</b></li> </ul>
<b>Re-Budget: Revision of budget, changes requiring approval.</b>	<b>If necessary, no later than 30 days before the end of the budget period. Discuss budget revisions with your Portfolio Manager prior to initiating an amendment in the electronic grants management system.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic grants management system</b></li> </ul>

### Federal Fiscal Year - October 1 – September 30

Federal Quarter	Reporting Periods		
	Start	End	Due Date
<b>Quarter 3</b>	April 1	June 30	July 30
<b>Quarter 4</b>	July 1	September 30	October 30

## Appendix A.6 – Volunteer Tracking Software Distributors

Following is a list of software programs that are designed to track volunteer demographic and service information. This information is provided for the convenience of grantees, and **AmeriCorps Seniors does not endorse these or any other vendors**. Please bring any other vendors to the attention of AmeriCorps Seniors so they can be added to future lists through your portfolio manager.

Leaping Ware (formally VolTrax): [www.leapingware.com/index.html](http://www.leapingware.com/index.html)

OnCorps Reports: [www.oncorpsreports.com](http://www.oncorpsreports.com)

Volunteer Hub: [www.volunteerhub.com/](http://www.volunteerhub.com/)

Volunteer Reporter: [www.volsoft.com/product/volunteer-reporter/](http://www.volsoft.com/product/volunteer-reporter/)

Volgistics: [www.volgistics.com/](http://www.volgistics.com/)

Volunteer Spot: [www.volunteerspot.com/](http://www.volunteerspot.com/)

For a list of Volunteer Software with Reviews: [www.coyotecomunications.com/tech/volmanage.html](http://www.coyotecomunications.com/tech/volmanage.html)

## Appendix A.7 – Acronyms Related to AmeriCorps

425 .....	SF-425 Federal Financial Report (FFR)
424.....	SF-424 Application for Fed Assistance (Grant Application)
BPMPR .....	Budget, Performance, and Management Reporting
CB .....	Community-Based
CCR .....	Central Contractor Registration
CFDA .....	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
CFR.....	Code of Federal Regulation
eCFR.....	Electronic Code of Federal Regulation
CHC .....	Criminal History Check
DUNS.....	Data Universal Numbering System (Dun & Bradstreet)
EIN .....	Employer Identification Number
FFATA .....	Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act
FFR .....	Federal Financial Report
FGP .....	Foster Grandparent Program
FICA .....	Federal Insurance Contributions Act
SRS .....	FFATA Sub-award Reporting System
FMS .....	Financial Management System
GARP .....	Grant Application Review Process
GME .....	Grant-Making Entity
HHS .....	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
IDCR .....	Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate
IPERA.....	Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act
IPERIA.....	Improper Payments Elimination & Recovery Improvement Act
MTDC.....	Modified Total Direct Costs
NCBP.....	Nonprofit Capacity Building Program
NCCC .....	National Civilian Community Corps
NGA .....	Notice of Grant Award
NOFA .....	Notice of Funds Availability
NOFO .....	Notice of Funds Opportunity
NSCHC.....	National Service Criminal History Check
NSSC.....	National Senior Service Corps
OGA.....	Office of Grant Administration
OIG.....	Office of the Inspector General
OMB .....	Office of Management and Budget
OGM .....	Office of Grants Management (AmeriCorps)
PER .....	Periodic Expense Report
PFI .....	Programming for Impact
PMS .....	Payment Management System
PM .....	Portfolio Manager
PNS .....	Programs of National Significance
PPR .....	Program/Project Progress Report
PRS.....	Progress Report Supplement
RSVP .....	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
SAA .....	Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009
SCP .....	Senior Companion Program
SDP .....	Senior Demonstration Program
T/TA .....	Training and Technical Assistance
VGF .....	Volunteer Generation Fund
VISTA .....	Volunteers in Service to America
VSY .....	Volunteer Service Year

## Appendix A.8 – Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants

### **Purpose**

AmeriCorps has conducted a review of the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR 200, for all programs to ensure consistent guidance and practices in fund raising. As a result, AmeriCorps is providing an overview of the regulations, process for implementing, and FAQs as guidance for current grantees and prospective applicant organizations. Fund raising for the purposes of meeting program objectives is an allowable cost with permission from the federal agency (2 CFR 200.442(a)). In the past, grantees were not allowed budget staff time for fund raising to AmeriCorps Seniors funding. Most AmeriCorps Seniors awards require some level of match (also referred to as grantee share or non-federal funds) and often match is raised by grantees through fund raising activities. Match requirements vary across funding opportunities and all applicants should refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the required match.

### **Regulations**

AmeriCorps Seniors sponsors must follow the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Guidance, [2 CFR 200](#). The following sections of 2 CFR 200 specifically address fund raising:

[§ 200.442](#) Fund raising and investment management costs.

[§ 200.413](#) Direct costs.

2 CFR 200 applies to grant programs across the federal government. 2 CFR 200 implements government-wide decisions on what types of costs that may or may not be included in federal grant-funded programs or claimed as meeting grant match requirements.

One of the specific types of costs discussed in 2 CFR 200 is fund raising. When assessing if a cost is allowable, it is important to identify the purpose and the benefits the fund raising will have. According to 2 CFR 200.442(a), “organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable.” However, 2 CFR 200.442(a) allows fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting Federal program objectives with written prior approval from the Federal awarding agency.

### **Implementation Process**

Grantees can use the following approach to receive approval from AmeriCorps to charge fund raising costs to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant for the purpose of meeting Federal program objectives:

- During a continuation, renewal, a new application process, or an amendment include the following:
  - In the Other Narrative section, describe fund raising actions confirming they are allowable
  - Within budget narrative indicate which line items include fund raising expenses. All staff time can be included in the grantee share and AmeriCorps share columns. A portion of staff time should not be included in the excess column to account for time spent fund raising.
  - AmeriCorps staff will review the application and if all costs related to fund raising are related to the program objectives, will approve the application.
  - If unallowable costs are listed, AmeriCorps staff may return the application for corrections or not approve the application.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.8 - Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants

Note: If approved, time spent fund raising to meet AmeriCorps Seniors program objectives does not have to be tracked separately on project staff timesheets.

### Allowable and Non-Allowable Activities

#### What Project Staff Are Allowed to Do

As part of their work on their AmeriCorps Seniors grant-funded project, project staff may:

- Accept an unsolicited donation on behalf of the sponsor, as long as it is in line with the sponsor's written policies and procedures
- Charge expenses and staff time to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant for:
  - Preparing and submitting amendments, continuations, renewals, and competitive grants to continue or expand the current AmeriCorps Seniors program
  - Participating in internal discussions about the project budget
  - Attending fundraising workshops or sessions about fundraising at AmeriCorps-sponsored and other approved conferences
  - Conducting fundraising activities (including staff time, mailings, etc.) that support the AmeriCorps Seniors program objectives

#### What Project Staff Are NOT Allowed to Do

As part of their work on their AmeriCorps Seniors grant-funded project, project staff may NOT:

- Solicit gifts from participants or beneficiaries in the AmeriCorps Seniors program
- Charge staff time or expenses to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant for fundraising on behalf of their sponsor organization for activities that are not part of the AmeriCorps Seniors program objectives.
  - If a project director needs to spend time on fundraising for other activities outside of the AmeriCorps Seniors program, they may request an approval from their Portfolio Manager for a less than full time project director and must account for this staff time separately if the request is approved. In this situation, staff time must be accounted for in the Excess column of the budget.
- Charge staff time to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant for new applications for AmeriCorps programs that are not part of the current program, such as an AmeriCorps VISTA or AmeriCorps State and National grant.

#### What Volunteers Are Allowed and Not Allowed to Do

Program Type	Allowable as Part of Service	Not Allowable as Part of Service
RSVP & Non-Stipended SDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise resources, including in-kind resources, cash donations, or grants, for their project, consistent with the objectives of the project approved in the application</li><li>• Engage in fundraising for their sponsoring organization's Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solicit gifts or donations from participants or beneficiaries in the AmeriCorps Seniors program</li></ul>

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.8 - Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants

Program Type	Allowable as Part of Service	Not Allowable as Part of Service
FGP, SCP, and Stipended SDP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stipended volunteers are not allowed to conduct or engage in any fundraising activities including soliciting gifts or donations from participants or beneficiaries in the AmeriCorps Seniors program</li></ul>

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. We are a non-AmeriCorps funded AmeriCorps project and receive no federal funds. Are we subject to the same restrictions on fund raising by staff?

No. The OMB regulations on allowable costs do not apply to projects that do not receive federal funds. However, organizations should be sure that support that they receive from state and local sources are not “subgrants” of federal funds. Subgrants of federal grants are also required to follow [§ 200.442](#).

2. Is this guidance a change from previous guidance that project directors who engage in organized fund raising not charge 100 percent of their time to the grant?

Yes. Project directors may charge 100% of time to the grant, including fund raising, as long as the activities support the program objectives. If the fund-raising activity does not support the project activities, the project director may not charge the time to the grant.

3. If our approved grant application currently separates out fund raising time under Excess, what can we do to have those costs be added into the CNCS or grantee share of the budget?

You can reach out to your Portfolio Manager to discuss submitting an amendment following the information in the Implementation Process of this guidance.

## Appendix A.9 – Sample Checklist for Station Accessibility

This questionnaire is designed to allow evaluation of the overall accessibility of the ABC program by looking at where we send volunteers to serve. It is not meant to eliminate stations for possible placement of volunteers but to provide information needed to match volunteers with volunteer stations.

Organization Name

		No	Yes	Comments
1	Is there a flat, non-gravel route from parking/street through the front entrance? Does the parking lot have spaces reserved for persons with disabilities?			
2	Are doors (entrance, rest room, etc.) no heavier to open than refrigerator door? Are door knobs throughout push/pull or lever-type, not twist knobs?			
3	Are halls and passageways at least one yard wide? Are they level, with non-slip stable surfaces and no trip hazards?			
4	Are there no steps without alternate routes (elevators, ramps, other entrance) available? Are stairs of uniform heights?			
5	Is there adequate maneuvering clearance at entrances, especially rest rooms?			
6	Does an accessible restroom have an accessible stall 5' x 5'? (There are other legal configurations, but check to see if a person in a wheelchair can close the door)			
7	Does an accessible restroom have a sink with lever faucets, hot water pipes wrapped to prevent burns, and paper towels lowered?			
8	Are emergency alarms both audible and visual? Are evacuation plans and areas of rescue assistance accessible to individuals with mobility impairments?			
9	Do policies, practices or standards – either formal or informal- have the direct or indirect effect of excluding or limiting the participation of individuals with disabilities in your organization's program or activities?			
10	Do policies exist that ensure that a "reasonable accommodation" is made to individuals, including volunteers, with disabilities?			

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Name/Signature of person completing checklist

Date

## Appendix A.10 – AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Coverage Requirements

*This document summarizes the minimum insurance requirements for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, specified by AmeriCorps Seniors. Minimum required levels may change from time to time.*

### **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

- Accident insurance must cover AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP, SCP, RSVP, and SDP for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their volunteer service, during meal periods while serving as a volunteer, and while attending project-sponsored activities. Protection shall be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the volunteer from other sources, including:
  1. Health insurance coverage.
  2. Other hospital or medical service plans.
  3. Any coverage under labor-management trusted plans, union-welfare plans, employer organization plans, or employee-benefit organization plans.
  4. Coverage under any governmental program or provided by any statute.
- When benefits are approved in the form of services rather than cash payments, the reasonable cash value of each service rendered must be considered in determining the applicability of this provision. The benefits payable must include the benefits that would have been payable had a claim been duly made. The benefits payable must be reduced to the extent necessary so that the sum of such reduced benefits and all the benefits provided for by any other plan must not exceed the volunteer's total expenses.
- The sponsor must provide AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with the following accident insurance coverage:
  - \$50,000 or more for accidental medical expenses.
  - \$50 for repair or replacement of damaged eyeglass frames and \$50 for replacement of broken prescription eyeglass lenses or contact lenses.
  - \$500 for repair of dentures; \$500 per tooth for treatment of injury to natural teeth, limited to a total of \$900.
  - \$2,500 for accidental death or dismemberment.

### **PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. It does not include professional liability coverage. Protection must be provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. The sponsor must provide third-party protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of their volunteer service activities. For each sponsoring organization, the amount of protection must be \$1,000,000 for each occurrence of personal injury or property damage and must be in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance, and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.



## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.10 - AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Coverage Requirements**

### **EXCESS AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE**

To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by a volunteer's personal vehicle insurance and liability claims in excess of that coverage, the sponsor must provide Excess Automobile Liability Insurance coverage of not less than \$500,000 each accident for bodily injury and/or property damage.

The sponsor will provide protection against claims in excess of the greater of either:

1. The liability insurance volunteers carry on their own automobiles
2. The limits of the applicable state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law or
3. In the absence of a state financial responsibility law, \$50,000 for each person, each accident, and for property damage

## Appendix A.11 – Evidence-Based Programs and Registries

**Table 1. Federal registries of evidence-based interventions**

These registries rate or list programs or practices based on rigorous studies and outcomes of interest to AmeriCorps. Use the link in the table below to go directly to the search page.

<p><b>Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices</b></p>	<p>The purpose of the Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices initiative (ADEPP) was to help the public learn more about available evidence-based programs and practices in the areas of aging and disability and determine which of these may best meet their needs.</p>	<p>Evidence based programs summaries and examples on the Administration for Community Living website:  <a href="https://acl.gov/programs/strengthening-aging-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-evidence-based-programs-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-evidence-based-programs">https://acl.gov/programs/strengthening-aging-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-evidence-based-programs-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-evidence-based-programs</a></p>
<p><b>AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange</b></p>	<p>The AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange is a repository of research and evaluation reports funded through AmeriCorps resources.</p>	<p>AmeriCorps Research and Evidence:  <a href="https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange">https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange</a></p>
<p><b>CLEAR: Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research</b></p>	<p>CLEAR's mission is to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public more broadly so that it can inform their decisions about labor policies and programs. CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive statistical studies and outcome analyses, implementation, and causal impact studies.</p>	<p>Department of Labor research:  <a href="https://clear.dol.gov/">https://clear.dol.gov/</a></p>
<p><b>National Institute of Justice CrimeSolutions</b></p>	<p>CrimeSolutions helps practitioners and policymakers understand what programs &amp; practices work in criminal and juvenile justice, victims' assistance, school safety, and youth mentoring.</p>	<p><a href="https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/">https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/</a></p>
<p><b>ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)</b></p>	<p>The ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) search engine is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education to provide extensive access to educational-related literature. ERIC provides coverage of open access journal articles, and some unpublished full-text documents on conferences, meetings, reports, etc.</p>	<p>U.S. Department of Education literature and research search engine: <a href="https://eric.ed.gov/">https://eric.ed.gov/</a></p>

**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.11 - Evidence-Based Programs and Registries**

<p><b>DOJ - Victims of Crime Resource &amp; Research Center</b></p>	<p>The Victims of Crime Resource &amp; Research Center Resource Library is a searchable collection of materials that victim service providers and allied professionals can use for organizational development and training needs.</p>	<p>Department of Justice research and materials:  <a href="https://www.ovcttac.gov/resourceLibrary/index.cfm?nm=tsd">https://www.ovcttac.gov/resourceLibrary/index.cfm?nm=tsd</a></p>
<p><b>Children’s Bureau Administration for Children and Families’ Child Welfare Information Gateway</b></p>	<p>Child Welfare Information Gateway Library Catalog is the largest federally funded collection of child welfare related resources, with peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, books, and more.</p>	<p>Resources related to child welfare:  <a href="https://cwlibrary.childwelfare.gov/discovery/search?vid=01CWIG_INST:01CWIG">https://cwlibrary.childwelfare.gov/discovery/search?vid=01CWIG_INST:01CWIG</a></p>
<p><b>Administration for Children and Families Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness, tribal home visiting</b></p>	<p>The HomVEE project includes a review of studies about early childhood home visiting models that are of potential relevance to tribal populations, including American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) families and children.</p>	<p>Research studies and resources for tribal populations:  <a href="https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/tribal">https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/tribal</a></p>
<p><b>National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare</b></p>	<p>The interactive bibliography search is a resource for individual citations identified in the field of cross-system issues involving child welfare, substance use disorders, and family treatment and dependency courts.</p>	<p><a href="https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/research/bibliography/">https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/research/bibliography/</a></p>
<p><b>Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse</b></p>	<p>The Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse is a comprehensive, transparent, and systematic assessment of the evidence on programs, or interventions, that aims to improve the employment-related outcomes of individuals with low income.</p>	<p>Department of Health and Human Services evidence resources:  <a href="https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/find-interventions">https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/find-interventions</a></p>
<p><b>Administration for Children and Families Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse</b></p>	<p>The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse conducts objective and transparent reviews of research on programs and services intended to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements. Programs are rated as “well-supported,” “supported,” “promising,” or “does not meet current criteria.”</p>	<p>Department of Health and Human Services program resources:  <a href="https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/program">https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/program</a></p>
<p><b>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center</b></p>	<p>The Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center provides information and tools to incorporate evidence-based practices on prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for mental and substance use disorders.</p>	<p>Information and tools for evidence-based practices:  <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp">https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp</a></p>

**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.11 - Evidence-Based Programs and Registries**

<b>Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Research Library</b>	Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Research Library includes publications and research related to rapid rehousing, homelessness prevention, and the core concepts and practice standards associated with SSVF.	Department of Veteran Affairs research library: <a href="https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/research-library/">https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/research-library/</a>
<b>Institute of Education Science What Works Clearinghouse</b>	What Works Clearinghouse provides access to practice guides, intervention reports, reviews of individual studies, and data from study reviews, to provide information on evidence-based decisions in classrooms and schools.	<a href="https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/">https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/</a>

**Table 2. Other registries of evidence-based interventions**

These registries rate or list programs or practices based on rigorous studies and outcomes of interest to AmeriCorps. Use the link in the table to go directly to the search page.

<b>Child Care &amp; Early Education Research Connections</b>	Child Care & Early Education Research Connections reviews the latest research on the childcare and early education workforce.	Research database for childcare and early education: <a href="https://researchconnections.org/">https://researchconnections.org/</a>
<b>ArtsEdSearch</b>	ArtsEdSearch is a hub for research on the impact of arts education.	Arts research hub: <a href="https://www.artsedsearch.org/">https://www.artsedsearch.org/</a>
<b>CEBC: California-Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare</b>	The mission of the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) is to advance the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system.	Evidence based practices for anyone working in child welfare systems: <a href="https://www.cebc4cw.org/">https://www.cebc4cw.org/</a>
<b>Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness</b>	The Clearinghouse is an applied research center created to help professionals identify, implement, evaluate, and improve programs that strengthen military service members, veterans, and their families.	Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness: <a href="https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/">https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/</a>
<b>Cumulative Index on Nursing, and Allied Health Initiatives</b>	CINAHL indexes the top nursing and allied health literature available including nursing journals and publications from the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses Association.	Nursing and allied health available literature: <a href="https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/cinahl-database">https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/cinahl-database</a>
<b>Rural Health Information Hub Rural Aging in Place Toolkit, Program Clearinghouse</b>	The HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy has funded several programs in rural areas with the goal of aging in place as part of the 330A Outreach Authority program. This program focuses on expanding access to healthcare services in rural areas. This clearinghouse consists of current 330A Outreach Authority grantees and other organizations that have developed promising programs designed to improve aging in place in a rural community.	Aging in Place toolkit: <a href="https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/aging/3/program-clearinghouse">https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/aging/3/program-clearinghouse</a>

Version 2024.2

Document are provided as samples ONLY. Its use is optional and, if used, it should be customized as appropriate. For editable versions of samples and templates, visit the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page

**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.11 - Evidence-Based Programs and Registries**

<b>Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research</b>	The purpose of the Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR) is to make it easier to find, understand, and use the results of research that can make a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities. The strategies database can be used to find research studies, or evaluation instruments and other tools.	<a href="https://ktddr.org/ktstrategies/ktstrategies_search.cgi">https://ktddr.org/ktstrategies/ktstrategies_search.cgi</a>
<b>National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board</b>	The National Mentoring Resource Center Research reviews research regarding the effectiveness of specific mentoring programs, as well as different practices and resources for use in programs.	Research tools: <a href="https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/research-tools/">https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/research-tools/</a>
<b>Pew Results First Clearinghouse Database</b>	The Results First Clearinghouse Database is an online resource that brings together information on the effectiveness of social policy programs from nine national clearinghouses. It applies color-coding to the clearinghouses' distinct rating systems, creating a common language that enables users to quickly see where each program falls on a spectrum from negative impact to positive impact.	Pew Results Database: <a href="https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database">https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database</a>
<b>Results For America Economic Mobility Catalog</b>	The Economic Mobility Catalog is intended to help local leaders identify and implement evidence-based strategies to improve upward economic mobility. Strategies are categorized by issue area, including early childhood, K-12 education, health and well-being, and more.	Economic Mobility Catalog: <a href="https://catalog.results4america.org/">https://catalog.results4america.org/</a>
<b>Social Programs that Work</b>	Social Programs that Work identifies social programs found in rigorous studies to produce sizable, sustained benefits to participants and society. This review includes all areas of social policy.	<a href="https://evidencebasedprograms.org/">https://evidencebasedprograms.org/</a>
<b>The Campbell Collaboration</b>	The Campbell Collaboration is a social science research network that produces high quality, open, and policy-relevant evidence syntheses, plain language summaries, and policy briefs, including subjects like older adult isolation and loneliness.	<a href="https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/">https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/</a>
<b>The Community Guide</b>	The Community Guide is a collection of evidence-based recommendations and findings from the Community Preventive Services Task Forces, which makes evidence-based recommendations of the effectiveness and economic impact of public health programs, services, and other interventions used in real-world settings.	Evidence based resources from the Community Prevention Task Force: <a href="https://www.thecommunityguide.org/">https://www.thecommunityguide.org/</a>

**Table 3. Sample studies available for use on AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange**

This table provides samples of available studies and evaluation reports that may be of interest to AmeriCorps Seniors programs from the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange. AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange is a digital repository of research and evaluation reports focused on national service, social innovation, civic engagement, and volunteering. Please consult the full repository for more.

Study Name	Beneficiary Population	Volunteer Population	Broad category	Year	Link
<b>Longitudinal Study of Foster Grandparent &amp; Senior Companion Programs: Service Delivery Implications and Health Benefits to the Volunteers</b>	FGP; SCP	FGP; SCP	Healthy Futures	2018	<a href="https://www.americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/Longitudinal-Study-of-Foster-Grandparent-and-Senior-Companion-Programs%3A-Service-Delivery-Implications-and-Health-Benefits-to-the-Volunteers">https://www.americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/Longitudinal-Study-of-Foster-Grandparent-and-Senior-Companion-Programs%3A-Service-Delivery-Implications-and-Health-Benefits-to-the-Volunteers</a>
<b>Does the Senior Companion Respite Service Matter for the Health and Well-being of Caregivers?</b>	SCP	SCP	Healthy Futures; Supporting Caregivers	2017	<a href="https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/Does-the-Senior-Companion-Respite-Service-Matter-for-the-Health-and-Well-being-of-Caregivers%3F">https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/Does-the-Senior-Companion-Respite-Service-Matter-for-the-Health-and-Well-being-of-Caregivers%3F</a>
<b>A Systematic Review of Senior Corps' Impact on Volunteers and Program Beneficiaries</b>			Aging in place, Benefit to national service members/volunteers, Nonprofit development, Improving AmeriCorps	2019	<a href="https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/A-Systematic-Review-of-Senior-Corps%E2%80%99-Impact-on-Volunteers-and-Program-Beneficiaries">https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/A-Systematic-Review-of-Senior-Corps%E2%80%99-Impact-on-Volunteers-and-Program-Beneficiaries</a>
<b>Return on Investment Study: AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent &amp; Senior Companion Program</b>	SCP; FGP	SCP; FGP	Aging in place, Benefit to national service members/volunteers, Nonprofit development, Improving AmeriCorps	2021	<a href="https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/return-investment-study-americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program-senior">https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/return-investment-study-americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program-senior</a>

## Appendix A.12 – Guidance on Prohibition of Fee-for-Service Activities

As set forth in Section 404(c) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA), there is a general prohibition against grantees and volunteer stations requesting or receiving any compensation for the services of volunteers in [AmeriCorps Seniors] SCP, FGP, RSVP, or SDP programs. This prohibition is sometimes referred to as the “fee-for-service” prohibition. Section 404(c) provides the following:

### **(c) Compensation of supervising agencies or organizations**

No agency or organization to which volunteers are assigned hereunder, or which operates or supervises any volunteer program hereunder, shall request or receive any compensation from such volunteers or from beneficiaries for services of volunteers supervised by such agency or organization.

In some cases, determining whether a payment requested or received by a grantee or volunteer station is permissible in light of the prohibition is relatively straightforward. In other cases, however, making determinations as to whether the arrangement is permissible in light of the prohibition requires a more in-depth review, including an assessment by AmeriCorps Seniors.

Please see the examples below.

#### **Examples:**

##### **Scenario 1:**

An AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee has a volunteer station that provides program activities, including a personal safety/first aid course available to the local community. The course is taught by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers assigned to that volunteer station, and each student enrolled in the course is required to pay a \$20.00 fee, which covers the course materials (i.e., workbook on first aid/CPR). The \$20.00 fee is solely a reimbursement to the volunteer station for the expenses it incurs for purchase of the course materials.

This arrangement results in a volunteer station requesting and receiving payments from all members of the local community (i.e., beneficiaries) who enroll in the course. Moreover, under this arrangement, the teacher of the course is an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.

#### ***Is this arrangement permissible?***

Yes, this arrangement is permissible.

Although the volunteer station is requesting and receiving payments from everyone who takes the course, and the teacher is an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, the volunteer station is not receiving payment for the services of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer. Rather, the \$20.00 fee is solely to reimburse the volunteer station for the costs of the course materials. Therefore, this arrangement is permissible and does not violate the DVSA statutory prohibition.

##### **Scenario 2:**

An AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee has a volunteer station located at a local elementary school. As part of the volunteer station’s service activities, it prepares and serves children lunch meals at the school cafeteria twice a week. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers help to prepare and serve the children the meals. The volunteer station requests and receives from each child’s parent or guardian a fee of \$7.00 per meal. The volunteer station receives all the food to prepare the meals as in-kind donations from the school. Because all the food

is donated, the \$7.00 fee received is not used at all to reimburse the volunteer station for expenses incurred. Rather, the \$7.00 fee is entirely profit for the volunteer station.

***Is this arrangement permissible?***

No. This arrangement is not permissible.

Here the volunteer station requests and receives payment for each child who receives a meal (i.e., each beneficiary). The meals are prepared and served by non-salaried AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. In addition, the payment does not reimburse the volunteer station for the expenses it has incurred for the food. Rather, the \$7.00 fee is used by the volunteer station to pay other expenses; the \$7.00 fee is not used to cover the cost of employing people to prepare and serve the meals. Under these facts, the volunteer station appears to be receiving a profit for each meal served – i.e., \$7.00 per meal in profit. Moreover, the \$7.00 per meal fee is not nominal. Therefore, this arrangement is not permissible. The arrangement violates the “fee-for-service” prohibition.

**Scenario 3:**

Assume the same facts as the example immediately above, except that the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer station requests and receives from the child’s parent or guardian a fee of \$2.00 per meal.

***Is this arrangement permissible?***

The grantee should seek review and a definitive answer from AmeriCorps Seniors. Explanation: Here, the volunteer station requests and receives payment for each child who receives a meal (i.e., each beneficiary). The meals are prepared and served by AmeriCorps Senior volunteers. In addition, the \$2.00 per meal payment does not reimburse the volunteer station for expenses because the food has been donated. The volunteer station is receiving the \$2.00 per meal payment which the volunteer station uses to cover station expenses other than the preparation and serving of the food. However, the \$2.00 per meal charge is a nominal fee. While the \$2.00 per meal charge may be deemed profit, the amount is nominal, and the beneficiary receives a plain benefit at a reduced rate.

The grantee should seek AmeriCorps Seniors’ review and assessment of the specific facts to ensure that the grantee is in compliance with the statutory provision. If AmeriCorps Seniors determines that the amount received by the volunteer station is nominal, the arrangement would be permissible.

**Scenario 4:**

As a final example, assume that an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee has a volunteer station within a county. The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee receives state grant funds that permit payments to the grantee to reimburse it for transportation-related expenses to transport eligible disabled adults to medical appointments within the county. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have assignments that include driving these adults to and from their medical appointments within the county. The volunteer drives a vehicle that is owned and operated by the sponsor or the station. Those eligible disabled adults who participate in this service are required to pay the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee directly \$6.00 per ride roundtrip. Of the \$6.00 fee, the adult who is being given the ride (i.e., the beneficiary) pays \$4.00 per roundtrip ride that covers some but usually not all of the actual fuel costs. The other \$2.00 is intended to cover, as appropriate, other costs that may be associated with operating the vehicle (e.g., maintenance, repairs). Finally, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer who is driving the adult receives no payments for his or her driving services. The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee receives all payments related to the driving services.



***Is this arrangement permissible?***

The grantee should seek review and a definitive answer from AmeriCorps Seniors. Explanation: Here, the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantee receives payment from beneficiaries in the county who receive rides to medical appointments from AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Of the \$6.00 per roundtrip ride, \$4.00 is meant to reimburse some but usually not all of the fuel-related expenses. The other \$2.00 paid by the beneficiary is intended to cover costs that may, or may not, be associated with repair and maintenance of the vehicle operating the vehicle. However, regardless of how the volunteer station uses this \$2.00 amount, and even though the amount may be deemed profit, the amount is nominal. Also, the roundtrip ride that costs \$6.00 provides the beneficiary a plain benefit at a reduced rate.

The grantee should seek AmeriCorps Seniors' review and assessment of the specific facts to ensure that the grantee is in compliance with the statutory provision. If AmeriCorps Seniors determines that the amount received by the volunteer station is nominal, the arrangement would be permissible.

## Appendix A.13 – Sample Data Sharing Agreement

This sample data sharing agreement contains basic provisions that can guide the data collection responsibilities of an AmeriCorps Seniors sponsor and a station.

This sample is based on the Performance Measure ED23A: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness.

The description of data, frequency of collection, and collection tool should be revised to fit the needs of the sponsor and station based on the performance measures included in its AmeriCorps Seniors grant. **Look for information in [brackets and highlighting] for guidance on what additional information to include in some areas.**

Collaboration with stations in selecting your performance measures and designing your data sharing procedures is strongly encouraged.

The material in this document may be integrated into a memorandum of understanding (MOU), added to an MOU as an appendix or exhibit, or used as a stand-alone agreement.

## Appendix A.14 – Sample In-Kind Contribution Form

### Contributor Information

Name of Business \_\_\_\_\_

or Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contributed Goods or Services

Description of Contributed Goods or Services: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Contributed: \_\_\_\_\_

Real or Estimated Value of Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How was the value determined?:

Actual Value

Appraisal

Other

If other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Who Made this Value Determination?: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a restriction on the use of this contribution?:

No

Yes

If yes, what are the restrictions?: \_\_\_\_\_

Was this Contribution Obtained with or Supported by Federal funds?:

No

Yes

If yes, please provide the name of the Federal agency and the grant or contract number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Contributor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Contributed

***Thank you for your support!!***

**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.14 - Sample In-Kind Contribution Form**

<i>Office Use Only:</i>				
<i>Person Receiving Goods or Services on Behalf of Non-Profit Organization of My County:</i>				
<i>Printed Name</i>		<i>Position</i>		
<i>Signature</i>		<i>Date Received</i>		
<i>Accounting Use Only:</i>				
\$				
<i>Value Recorded</i>	<i>DR/CR Account Numbers</i>	<i>Date Entered</i>	<i>Data Entry Person</i>	<i>JE Number</i>

## Appendix A. 15 - AmeriCorps Seniors FY 2025 Final Rule

### AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs

#### 1. Modernized Income Calculation

**Change:** AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion programs will no longer be required to include the value of:

- shelter, food, and clothing that relatives provide to the volunteer, or
- financial support that absent relatives opt to provide but are not legally required to provide.

Under the proposed and final rules, the only financial support from non-resident relatives (other than the spouse living in the same residence) that is included in the volunteer's income calculation is financial support that the relatives are legally required to provide.

The volunteer's spouse's income is included in the calculation only if the spouse lives in the same residence with the volunteer. As a result, when examining a volunteer's income to determine eligibility for a stipend under this proposal, AmeriCorps Seniors would look only at the volunteer's income, plus the spouse's income if the spouse lives in the same residence.

The final rule also removes strike benefits and training stipends from the calculation of income because their removal supports modernization of the regulations.

**Impact:** This adjustment allows more low-income older adults to participate in the program and become eligible to receive a stipend for their service, which will expand opportunities for community involvement.

**Applicable** to FY 2024 Awards starting Oct. 1, 2024.

#### 2. Stipend Continuation During Administrative Leave

**Change:** Grantees may permit administrative leave to their volunteers in those unusual and rare situations that prevent a volunteer, through no fault of their own, from serving at their volunteer station, as long as the grantee's program policies permit administrative leave in such situations. While grantees must define the specifics of administrative leave, the rule provides parameters by defining the term as a temporary absence that the sponsor allows in extenuating circumstances that prevent the volunteer from serving, or from serving safely.

The final rule provides a check on grantees providing administrative leave to volunteers by requiring AmeriCorps' approval to pay the stipend for administrative leave after the seventh calendar day of the extenuating circumstances that are the basis for the administrative leave. Request process - Grantees must submit their request in writing to their portfolio manager with the following information:

- 1) Description of the extenuating circumstance(s) and how it meets the unusual and rare situation as stated in the final rule;
- 2) the date your project began to be impacted by the extenuating circumstance(s) and when the situation will be resolved;
- 3) the number of volunteers for whom you are seeking approval to pay administrative leave;
- 4) for each volunteer, the proposed start and end dates for payment of administrative leave;

- 5) a copy of the program's written service policy that addresses administrative leave.
- 6) Your portfolio manager will review respond with acknowledgement.

If the volunteer(s) are not able to return to serve by the end date listed in the original notification, the process should begin again, with the program providing written justification to the portfolio manager why administrative leave is still needed.

**Impact:** Volunteers can maintain financial stability even when temporarily unable to serve, which ensures continuous support without the fear of income loss.

**Applicable** to FY 2024 Awards starting Oct. 1, 2024.

### **3. Supplementing Stipends**

**Change:** Grantees now have the flexibility to supplement stipends with their own funds, allowing hourly rate adjustment as needed to recruit and support older adults in their communities. Grantees' supplementation of volunteers' stipends must comply with anti-discrimination and other laws.

Supplemental stipends must apply to all volunteers serving on the grant. For example, if you have an AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent grant that is approved to provide service to more than one geographic areas, all volunteers should have the same stipend rate no matter what geographic area they serve in.

Include in internal policies and procedures of how funding will be raised and distributed equally to all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serving on the grant. Note, funds should be document in grantee share of the budget.

**Impact:** This change offers community organizations greater control over stipend amounts, which will make attracting and retaining volunteers easier. Any increase can also count towards required match.

**Applicable** to FY 2025 Awards starting July 1, 2025.

## **AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP**

### **4. Consistency in Match Requirements**

**Change:** The match requirement for the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program is now standardized at 10 percent across all grant years, replacing the previous requirement of 30 percent in year three and beyond.

**Impact:** This standardization allows grantees to focus resources on program operations rather than meeting fluctuating match requirements, which promotes equity across all AmeriCorps Seniors programs.

**Applicable** to FY 2025 Awards starting April 1, 2025.

## Appendix A.16 – Technology Training Companies

Following is a list of technology focused training companies that are contractable for services to support training needs for volunteers. This information is provided for the convenience of grantees, and **AmeriCorps Seniors does not endorse these or any other vendors.** Please bring any other vendors to the attention of AmeriCorps Seniors so they can be added to future lists. (Email: [AmeriCorpsSeniors@AmeriCorps.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsSeniors@AmeriCorps.gov))

- For individual proposals for AmeriCorps Seniors grants, click [here](#).
- Cyber-Seniors: [www.cyberseniors.org](http://www.cyberseniors.org)
- Oasis Lifelong Adventure: [www.Oasisnet.org](http://www.Oasisnet.org)
- GetSetup: [www.getsetup.io](http://www.getsetup.io)

Appendix A. 17 - Respite Performance Measures Survey  
**RESPIRE PERFORMANCE MEASURE SURVEY**

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We would like to know how the Senior Companion Volunteer who has been providing respite care you has affected your life (as the caregiver).**

**All information will be kept confidential; please do not disclose your name. You may choose not to answer a question.**

**This 1st question is about how many hours of respite service that you may have received in the past 4 weeks from your senior companion.**

**Tell us how many TOTAL HOURS in a typical week you received respite services.**

**Here is an example of how Mrs. Jones would answer question #1:**

**Her Senior Companion usually spends one hour on Monday with and two hours on Wednesday providing respite services. Therefore, the total hours a week that she receives respite services is 3 hours a week.**

<b>1. In a typical week, my Senior Companion Volunteer is with me for</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <b>hours of respite</b>
---	---

**Please turn the page for the questions 2-12**



**Because I Have a Senior Companion Volunteer assisting with Respite Care**

...

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>2) ... I feel less lonely.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3) ... I feel I have close ties to other people.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4) ... I am able to do the things I need to do.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5) ... I am able to do most things I want to do.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6) ... I am more satisfied with my life.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7) ... The person I care for is able to remain at home.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8) ... I am able to get short-term rest and relief.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9) ... I am able to find time to run errands.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10) ... I am able find time to attend to my personal and health care needs.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11) Overall, I am satisfied with the Caregiver Respite Senior Companion volunteer.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12) Overall, the Senior Companion Program has met my expectations.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix A.18 - Independent Living Performance Measure Survey

### INDEPENDENT LIVING PERFORMANCE MEASURE SURVEY

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We would like to know how the Senior Companion Volunteer who has been assisting you has affected your life.**

**All information will be kept confidential; please do not disclose your name. You may choose not to answer a question.**

**This 1st question is about how many hours of service that you may have received in the past 4 weeks from your senior companion.**

**Tell us how many TOTAL HOURS in a typical week you received services.**

**Here is an example of how Mrs. Jones would answer question #1:**

**Her Senior Companion usually spends one hour on Monday with and two hours on Wednesday. Therefore, the total hours a week that she receives services is 3 hours a week.**

**1. In a typical week, my Senior Companion Volunteer is with me for**

**hours**

**Please turn the page for the questions 2-13**

**Because I Have a Senior Companion Volunteer ...**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>2) ... I feel less lonely.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3) ... I feel I have close ties to other people.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4) ... I am able to do the things I need to do.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5) ... I am able to do most things I want to do.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6) ... I am more satisfied with my life.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7) ... I can remain living in my own home.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8) ... I am able to get to the grocery store.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9) ... I am able to get to medical appointments.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10) ... I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11) ... I am eating regularly scheduled meals.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12) Overall, I am satisfied with my Senior Companion volunteer.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>13) Overall, the Senior Companion Program has met my expectations.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix A.19 – AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response

### OVERVIEW

Disaster and emergency response is one of the key focus areas of AmeriCorps. With its expansive network of volunteers across the country, AmeriCorps Seniors is committed to working within the communities it serves to respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies when they strike. Each AmeriCorps Seniors program can provide disaster and emergency response to their communities in times of need. However, AmeriCorps Seniors grantee operations and volunteers are themselves sometimes impacted and unable to function as normal. This document is intended to provide a framework to guide grantees who either wish to assist with response and recovery operations or who have been affected by a disaster and emergency. AmeriCorps Seniors programs respond to and can be impacted by disasters and emergencies including, but not limited to, forest fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, terror attacks, pandemics, and oil spills. Disasters and emergencies can be declared by federal, state and/or local officials, or agencies.

### WHAT TO DO WHEN DISASTER AND EMERGENCIES STRIKE

The primary concern of AmeriCorps Seniors during a disaster and emergency is the immediate safety and security of its grantees and volunteers. It is important for grantee staff and volunteers to follow all community, office, or building disaster preparedness plans for your location. Monitor your local news sources for the most up to date information and follow local or state emergency services guidance.

To ensure that all volunteers are accounted for before or after a disaster and emergency, AmeriCorps Seniors suggests that grantees establish a phone tree as part of any disaster preparedness planning. Program directors or the assigned disaster preparedness staff member will contact grantee staff members, who should each be assigned an equal number of volunteers in advance to contact before a known potential disaster—such as a hurricane—and/or after the immediate danger of a disaster has passed. Grantee staff will then report back to the relevant phone tree coordinator. AmeriCorps Seniors program directors should expect to be contacted by their Portfolio Manager who will be gathering information and updates on affected programs.

### RESPONDING TO AND RECOVERING FROM DISASTERS

Once AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and grantee staff are accounted for, grantees should assess whether or to what degree operations are impacted. AmeriCorps Seniors provides flexibility to grantees to revise work plans and Performance Measures in the aftermath of disasters in cases when original plans are no longer feasible and/or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can respond to emerging community needs in disaster response and long-term recovery. A set of [FAQs](#) has been provided as an appendix to this document outlining some of the ways that disaster-affected programs may wish to adjust their work, as well as details on allowance and reassignment of volunteers.

AmeriCorps Seniors programs with the desire or capacity to assist in disaster response and recovery efforts in their communities are strongly encouraged to consult with their Portfolio Manager and the [AmeriCorps Disaster Services Unit \(DSU\)](#). Coordination with these key AmeriCorps offices helps coordinate, track, and promote the full national service response and ensure that AmeriCorps Seniors activity is highlighted. Furthermore, these offices have experience, training, and access to resources to support AmeriCorps Seniors programs in effective service delivery. The response to a disaster and emergency will vary depending on AmeriCorps Seniors program and the local project design, but we know that national service is a powerful tool for helping to meet the needs of communities when disasters and emergencies strike.

### AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantees should consult with their Portfolio Manager if there are any temporary changes to service locations or clients being served. In consultation with their Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantees may determine they want to amend their approved work plan (either Performance Measures and/or service activities) to add additional Performance Measures to meet the new community needs

Version 2024.2

Document are provided as samples ONLY. Its use is optional and, if used, it should be customized as appropriate. For editable versions of samples and templates, visit the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page

## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response**

resulting from a disaster. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grantees that already have service activities in Performance Measures in the disaster services focus area may consider expanding those service activities to meet the increased needs resulting from a disaster and emergency in their geographic service area.

### **AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP who are unable to continue to serve their previously assigned children may be assigned temporarily to other children in shelters or other settings and may serve groups of children while seeking to provide one-on-one assistance wherever possible. AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent grantees should consult with their Portfolio Manager if there are any temporary changes to service locations or children being served. In consultation with their Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent grantees may determine they want to amend their approved work plan (either Performance Measures and/or service activities) to add additional Performance Measures to meet the new community needs resulting from a disaster. AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent grantees that already have service activities in Performance Measures in the disaster services focus area may consider expanding those service activities to meet the increased needs resulting from a disaster and emergency in their geographic service area.

### **AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program (SCP)**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP who are unable to continue to serve their previously assigned clients may be assigned temporarily to assist other adults with special needs. Assignment plans in such cases may be written generically in recognition of the temporary nature of the assignments. AmeriCorps Seniors SCP grantees should consult with their Portfolio Manager if there are any temporary changes to service locations or clients being served. In consultation with their Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion grantees may determine they want to amend their approved work plan (either Performance Measures and/or service activities) to add additional Performance Measures to meet the new community needs resulting from a disaster. AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion grantees that already have service activities in Performance Measures in the disaster services focus area may consider expanding those service activities to meet the increased needs resulting from a disaster and emergency in their geographic service area.

### **AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Demonstration Program (SDP)**

- For non-stipended volunteers, AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees should consult with their Portfolio Manager if there are any temporary changes to service locations or clients being served. In consultation with their Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees may determine they want to amend their approved work plan (either Performance Measures and/or service activities) to add additional Performance Measures to meet the new community needs resulting from a disaster. AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees that already have service activities in Performance Measures in the disaster services focus area may consider expanding those service activities to meet the increased needs resulting from a disaster and emergency in their geographic service area.
- For stipended volunteers who are unable to continue to serve their previously assigned children or clients, AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees may temporarily assign these stipended volunteers to assist other children or clients. Assignment plans in such cases may be written generically in recognition of the temporary nature of the assignments. AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees should consult with their Portfolio Manager if there are any temporary changes to service locations or clients being served. In consultation with their Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees may determine they want to amend their approved work plan (either Performance Measures and/or service activities) to add additional Performance Measures to meet the new community needs resulting from a disaster. AmeriCorps Seniors SDP grantees that already have service activities in Performance Measures in the disaster services focus area may consider expanding those service activities to meet the increased needs resulting from a disaster and emergency in their geographic service area.

**APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE AMERICORPS SENIORS SENIOR PROGRAMS**

**A) Program Operations in the Affected Area**

- 1) **We have lost all or a great many of our program files and other records as a result of the disaster. What should we do?**

Please contact your Portfolio Manager and advise them of the extent of the damage. It is important to document for your records when the damage occurred, how it occurred, the extent of the damage, and what types of files were lost in a memo to the file. Where possible, include photographs. Ensure any eligibility documents for both active staff and volunteers are acquired (such as NSCHC and/or income verification) and justification for the post-dated grant records is also included in the memo to file.

- 2) **We will be unable to achieve one or more of our Performance Measures because the disaster has interrupted or changed our program operations. What should we do?**

Please contact your Portfolio Manager to discuss the possibility of revising the number of volunteers in output and outcome-based Performance Measures and negotiate revised or new Performance Measures. After agreement is reached, if an amendment is required in your eGrants application, please complete within 30 days of your notification to portfolio manager. Please refer to Appendix B: Performance Measures Instructions found on the AmeriCorps Grantee and Sponsor pages: [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#)

Here are some tips for completing the Project Performance Report (PPR). Grantees are still required to report on progress toward meeting approved performance targets. Please follow Appendix B: Performance Measure Instructions, on the AmeriCorps Grantee and Sponsor pages: [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#), when reporting your outputs and outcome actuals. Grantees should identify the impact of the disaster and/or emergency on their operations within the relevant narratives section of the progress report. This includes challenges that disaster and/or emergency has had on operations, partnership/collaboration development, and non-federal share development. Grantees should also include a summary of any challenges faced for each Performance Measure in the Grantee Note associated with each Performance Measure. Finally, AmeriCorps is also interested in learning more about the tremendous work that AmeriCorps Seniors program grantees are doing to address the needs of the disaster and or emergency within their community. Please make sure to update your Portfolio Manager with details on how your program is responding to the emergency situation, including any challenges, status of volunteers, etc.

- 3) **As a result of the redirection of volunteer effort to support emergency disaster response activities, one or more of our Performance Measures in the work plan will no longer be valid. What should we do?**

Please contact your Portfolio Manager and discuss how your redirected activities will result in new Performance Measures in the work plan. Changes in programmatic activities must be reflected in your grant via an amendment in eGrants. Please complete within 30 days of notifying your Portfolio Manager. If a Performance Measure is no longer valid, please indicate in the community needs section. If a new Performance Measure is needed, it will be added in eGrants as an amendment.

- 4) **If a grantee is unable to access eGrants due to local technical issues, how should we process the required amendments?**

Contact your Portfolio Manager to document the issue and seek other solution.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response

- 5) **Due to the impact of the disaster, we cannot deliver the required in-service training for our AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for at least the next month or two. May we defer this training and deliver it at a later time?**

Yes. This must be documented by email and approved by the Portfolio Manager. The approval will be for a specific period of time. Please discuss with your Portfolio Manager the challenges and provide a projected timeline, if possible, for temporary activities or absence from service. Because this is an estimate, the timeline may be extended after another request to your Portfolio Manager.

- 6) **We have upcoming Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), letters of agreement, and other documents that need to be signed related to our AmeriCorps Seniors grant. What happens if we are unable to get them completed and signed before the expiration of the current agreement?**

AmeriCorps Seniors encourages grantees and sponsors to create or incorporate a plan in an organizational policy on how to obtain signatures in the event of a disaster and/or emergency. The use of electronic signatures is one example of acceptable way to certify documents. Additionally, grantee can consider integrating a process that could support an emergency extension to the MOUs as a Notice of Intent to renew/continue the agreement. Please develop an agency policy that addresses how and when electronic signature is appropriate and acceptable.

- 7) **I have volunteers who are serving through telework, but I am unable to get them to sign their timesheets due to a disaster and or emergency. What should I do?**

Volunteers who serve through telework are still required to submit a record of the hours they have served on a weekly or biweekly basis, and your grantee organization is still required to approve those hours in writing.

If your organization should have a policy for validating timesheets when a volunteer or employee is not available to sign their timesheet This policy should include an alternative way to create those records until the timesheet submission and validation can be done with original signatures. Volunteers who serve through telework may submit alternative written submissions to your organizations noting hours they have served. Rather than using a timesheet, their submissions may be sent, for example, via email to you, or via a note by text or smartphone photo. You may in turn approve each submission by sending a response back to the volunteer with a notation such as “Hours submitted approved.” You must maintain a record of these communications.

- 8) **I need to purchase supplies that are necessary as a consequence of the disaster and or emergency in order for volunteers to perform approved service activities. Is it allowable to use grant funds to purchase these supplies?**

Under certain conditions, it is allowable for AmeriCorps Seniors grantees to use grant funds to purchase supplies that have become necessary as a consequence of operational disruptions due to the impact of a disaster and/or an emergency. If a service activity is disrupted or otherwise adversely impacted, grant recipients may develop alternative types of service activities that are not specifically defined in the grant but are consistent with the goals and mission of the AmeriCorps Seniors program. The grantee should submit their written request to develop alternative activities and obtain written (email) approval from its Portfolio Manager as soon as practicable. If the approved service activity requires new supplies, the grantee must ensure that all costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable, and in support of approved service activities, in accordance with Office of Management and Budget cost principles set forth in [2 CFR §§200.403 – 405](#). All AmeriCorps Seniors grant recipients must follow the requirements in its “Budgetary Changes” section as prescribed in the terms and conditions in the grant award supporting documents. Please note, if the federal share of a grant is greater than the “Simplified Acquisition

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response

Threshold” amount of \$250,000 and the grantee’s cumulative changes exceeds 10% of the total budget, the grantee must obtain approval by submitting an amendment request. If the change is below 10%, the grantee does not need to obtain approval, but it still needs to document the change in its Memo to File. Many costs can be attributed to a “Other Volunteer Support Costs” line item, which would preclude the need to reallocate funds to a new line item and avoid the need for an amendment. As a reminder, any costs charged should be reasonable and prudent, properly valued, and consistent with the sponsoring organization’s account practices and documented. In normal circumstances, per AmeriCorps Seniors guidance, the Memorandum of Understanding between the sponsor and volunteer station should address payment arrangements for supplies (i.e., whether the sponsor or the volunteer station pays for supplies that a volunteer station needs). AmeriCorps Seniors recommends that that grantees and volunteer stations continue that practice and update, as needed, their Memoranda of Understanding outlining any new costs related to supplies needed in light of the disaster and/or the emergency. While a recommended practice, however, addressing payment arrangements in the Memorandum of Understanding between the sponsor and the volunteer station is not required. For some supplies that are monetarily expensive, such as technology to connect virtually, the grantee should develop a “user agreement” with each volunteer that lays out the appropriate uses of the supplies that align with the program’s goals and objectives and should also set forth prohibited uses. With certain program supply items, the grantee should implement an inventory management plan and use it prior to purchasing and distributing key supply items. An inventory management plan should, at a minimum, document the following for each supply:

- serial number, if applicable
- date of purchase
- to what volunteer it is assigned
- date it was delivered to the volunteer
- volunteer’s confirmation of receipt, including date
- date in which it was returned by volunteer
- report of loss of or damage, if applicable.

A volunteer is expected to return the supply item prior to exiting service in the program. It is also recommended that the grantee develop a policy and procedure for asset or supply management if one is not already in place.

### **B) Projects in Non-Affected Areas**

- 1) **Evacuees from a disaster area are in my community living in temporary housing. Our program would like to shift some of our volunteers to support the evacuees. Can we do so?**

Yes. Please contact your Portfolio Manager to discuss how your redirected activities will result in changes in your Performance Measures in the work plans. Changes in programmatic activities must be reflected in your grant via an amendment in eGrants. If a Performance Measure is no longer valid, please indicate in the community needs section. If a new Performance Measure is needed, it would be added in eGrants as an amendment.



## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response**

- 2) **May our volunteers respond to needs outside the project's service area resulting from a disaster, either by transporting or accompanying evacuees from where they are currently housed to the project service area or by serving at a distant location?**

The service of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers should focus on needs in their communities, including helping with the local response to the needs of evacuees.

- Grant funds can be used to transport evacuees.
- Grant funds may be used to reimburse meals or transportation costs for a AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer who is requested by a disaster response organization to accompany a child or adult who is being relocated.
- Grantees are encouraged to check with their insurance carrier concerning any limitations on liability coverage.

### **C) AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers in the Affected Area and their Stipends**

- 1) **How can we appropriately involve AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers in the Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Demonstration programs in relief efforts when their assigned children and adult clients are temporarily not accessible and some of the volunteer stations to which they are assigned may not be operating normally, if at all?**

AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers in the Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent, or Senior Demonstration program who are unable to continue to serve their previously assigned children or clients may be assigned temporarily to assist other children or adults. Assignment plans in such cases may be written generically in recognition of the temporary nature of the assignments.

- 2) **Our project has some AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers who have no remaining leave time and who are temporarily completely unable to serve due to circumstances caused by disaster or emergency. May we use project funds to assist them with a temporary allowance?**

In exceptional circumstances, where AmeriCorps Senior stipended volunteers are unable to serve and have exhausted all available leave, AmeriCorps may authorize the payment of a temporary allowance for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent, or Senior Demonstration programs, up to 10 weeks of the approved temporary allowance period by your Portfolio Manager. The primary reason for authorizing such an allowance is that these volunteers are trained and experienced service providers. Rather than risking the eventual loss of valuable AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers because of their inability to serve during this brief period, it is more advantageous to the respective AmeriCorps Seniors programs, as well as to the individual program sponsors and volunteer stations, to provide this temporary allowance. See Question 6 in this section for the approval process.

- 3) **Our project has AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers who were not scheduled to serve at this time. May they receive a temporary allowance?**

No. The temporary allowance may be paid only to AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers who are not able to serve because of the declared disaster/emergency or similar event.

- 4) **What is the amount of the temporary allowance and how long may it be paid?**

## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response**

The Program should use their own discretion to determine the appropriate number of weekly service hours for each stipended volunteer. Programs should be reasonable, fair, and consistent in their methodology for calculating hours, demonstrate in writing how they arrived at the average weekly service hours for each volunteer, and ensure that they have documented their decisions. (See Question 6 in this section for the approval process).

The temporary allowance may be paid at a flat rate for up to 10 weeks beginning as approved by the Portfolio Manager. Grantees may request up to 10 weeks of temporary allowance to be issued. The temporary allowance will be paid at the same rate as the stipend amount. Programs should calculate each individual volunteer's temporary allowance at the stipend amount and then multiple it with the average weekly service hours for each individual volunteer. The temporary allowance is intended for volunteers who have a reasonable expectation to serve but, due to the disaster, are unable to serve. Thus, if volunteers would not normally serve during the summer months, they should not receive the temporary allowance during this time. In instances where a volunteer is able to engage in certain service activities, but their weekly service hours for safe volunteering do not match their average weekly hours the volunteer would normally accrue through service, the grantee may use the temporary allowance and pro rate the allowance amount to make up the average weekly pay difference.

### **5) How is the temporary allowance funded?**

The temporary allowance may be funded through the current grant funds in the stipend line item. For purposes of FFR and PPR reporting, though they are not actual hours served by FGP, SCP, and SDP stipended volunteers, grantees may use hours computed by way of a volunteer's temporary allowance to report on VSY production. Similarly, FGP, SCP, and SDP grantees may count hours computed by way of the temporary allowance toward to meet the minimum hours of service of 260 hours annually or a 5 hours per week, as set forth in 45 CFR 2551.51 (SCP and SDP projects modeled after SCP) and 45 CFR 2552.51 (FGP and SDP projects modeled after FGP). Grantees should continue to follow existing tracking methods.

### **6) What are the steps in obtaining Portfolio Manager approval for and implementing a temporary disaster and/or emergency allowance to AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers who are unable to serve?**

**Step 1:** Write the Portfolio Manager providing the following information:

- the date your project began to be affected by the disaster/emergency
- a general description of how the disaster/emergency affected your service area
- supporting documentation of declared disaster and/or emergency from a federal, state, or local official or agency
- the number of volunteers for whom you are seeking approval to pay a temporary disaster allowance and the specific reasons they are unable to serve
- for each volunteer, the proposed start and end dates for payment of the temporary allowance.

**Step 2:** The Portfolio Manager will provide a written response approving or disapproving your request. If the request is not approved, you will receive an explanation of the reason and may provide additional information if the request is based on an initially incomplete request.

**Step 3:** When you receive Portfolio Manager approval to pay a temporary disaster allowance, you may begin paying it as of the approved date. Be sure your records document that these

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.19 - AmeriCorps Seniors Disaster and Emergency Response

payments correspond to the temporary allowance and are not stipend payments. Stipends may only be paid to serving volunteers and must be documented by time sheets.

**Step 4:** Immediately initiate a budget amendment in eGrants. At the budget screen, create a new Volunteer Expense line item labeled “Temporary Disaster/Emergency Allowance.” Off-line, for each volunteer, calculate the number of weeks for which the allowance has been approved, find the total number of hour for all volunteers receiving the allowance, and multiply the total number of hours by the current stipend rate to get the total of the approved allowances to be paid. Then reduce the stipend line item by this amount and add this amount to the new Temporary Disaster/Emergency Allowance line item.

**Step 5:** Submit your proposed amendment.

**Note:** If you do not have access to eGrants, the Portfolio Manager may initiate the amendment on your behalf.

### 7) **What if we are not able to return to full service after the 10 weeks of temporary allowance has been issued?**

If grantees are unable to resolve the barriers to engage AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers in safe service activities within 10 weeks, they may request a one-time extension of an additional 10 weeks, through their Portfolio Manager. The request must include:

- a description of the barriers and how many volunteers and stations are still impacted
- a plan to address the continued barriers so that volunteers are able to return to service
- the time period the extension is being requested for (not to exceed an additional ten weeks)
- the overall grant implications including but not limited to the impact on the budget and the approved Performance Measures.

### 8) **Some of our AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers are evacuees in another location outside our service area (or even in another state) where there is another AmeriCorps Seniors project. May they temporarily serve with the local project where they are located and receive a stipend?**

Yes, provided the local project where the volunteers have relocated is able to accept them. The local project should, if possible, obtain copies of the original volunteer application records documenting eligibility kept at the local project where the individual was serving, or re-qualify the volunteer as age and income eligible. The receiving project must have sufficient volunteer expense funds available and be able to find an assignment appropriate for the particular volunteer.

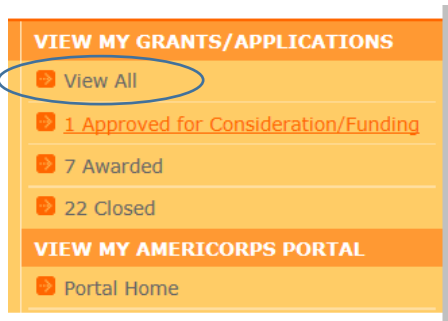
## Appendix A.20 Review and Update Project Contact Information in eGrants

### Steps to Review and Update Project Contact Information in eGrants

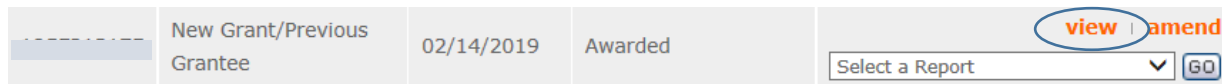
Note: Editing your project’s contact information in eGrants does not require an amendment.

**Step 1:** Log into [eGrants](#)

**Step 2:** Click **View All** to locate your currently awarded grant.

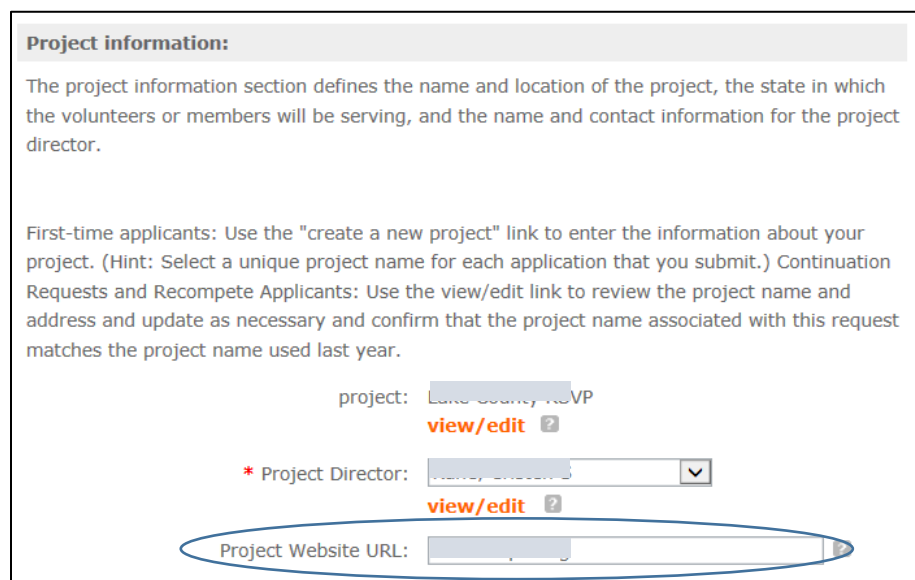


**Step 3:** Locate your most current application in Awarded status and click **View** (don’t worry if you also have an open amendment, you can still make these changes in the Awarded version).



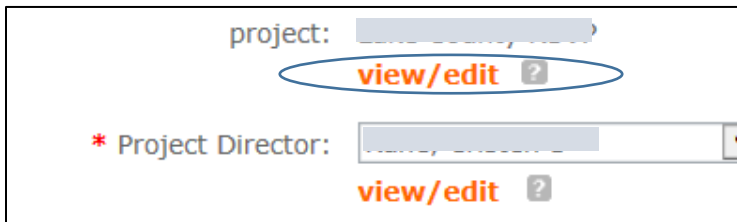
**Step 4:** In the menu on the left side, click **Applicant Info**.

**Step 5:** Scroll down to the *Project information* section. Review the Project Website URL to ensure that it is accurate. Make updates as desired and click **Save** at the bottom of the page. If your project does not have a website, please enter your organization’s general website or leave this section blank. Do not enter an email address as a substitute.



**AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.20 Review and Update Project Contact Information in eGrants**

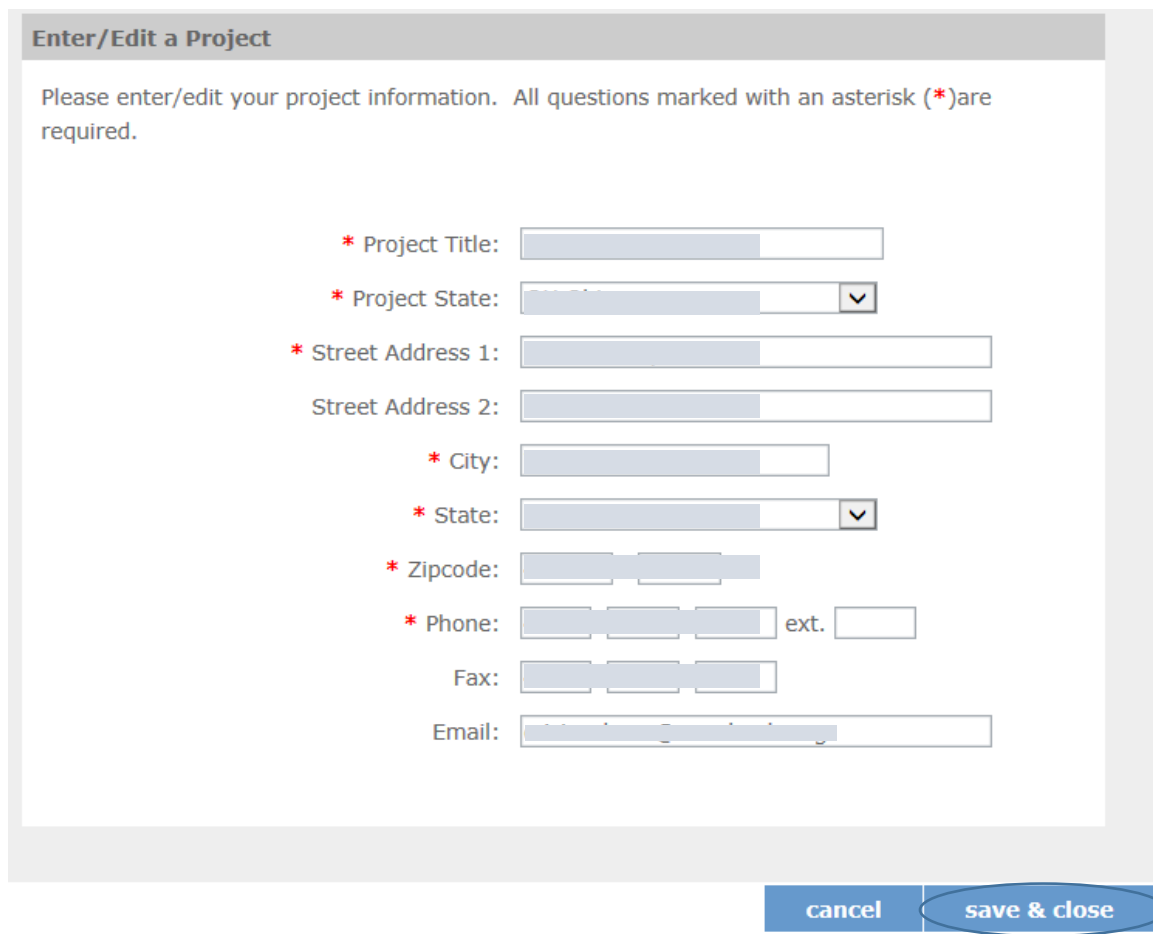
**Step 6:** Within the same *Project information* section, click **view/edit** under *project* to review and edit your project’s contact information.



**Step 7:** Review your project’s address, phone number, and email and make updates as necessary. **Do not edit your Project Title or Project State for any reason.**

The contact information in these fields will be shared with people who are interested in joining Senior Corps in your state. Therefore, we recommend entering general project contact information that would typically be shared in your project’s public marketing materials for prospective volunteers.

**Step 8:** Once you have finished updating your project’s contact information. Click **save & close**.



## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A.20 Review and Update Project Contact Information in eGrants

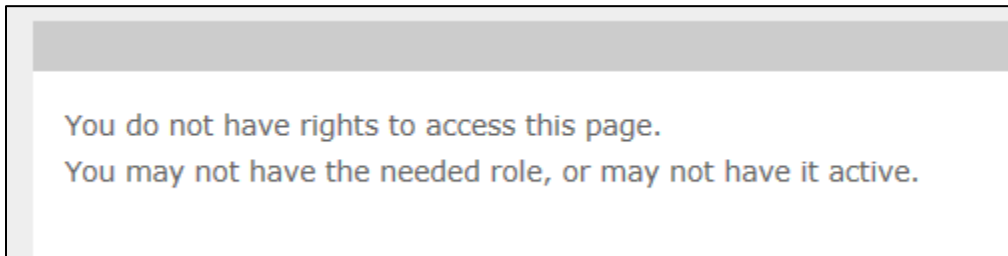
**You're done!** Please do not make updates to the Project Director information without contacting your program officer first. The contact information in the Project Director pop-up will not be displayed in the Pathfinders tool.

### Possible Warnings and Errors

When making updates to your contact information, you may get one of the following warning or error messages:

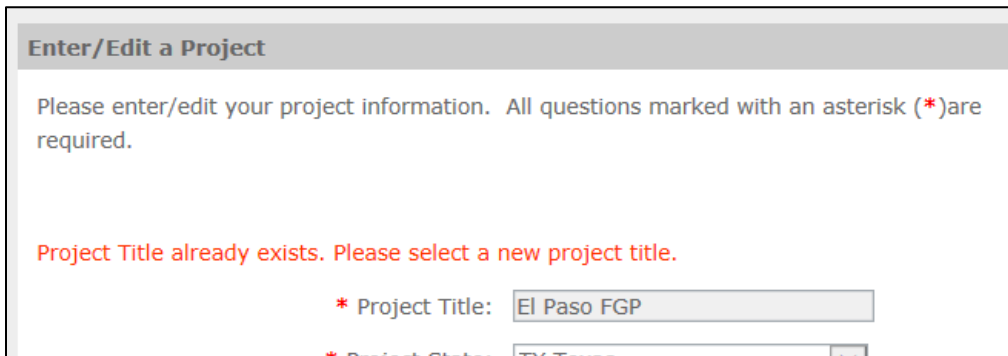
Error Message 1: You do not have rights to access this page.

*Action:* If you get this message after clicking **save**, simply click the back arrow on the top left of your browser to return to the previous screen.



Error Message 2: Project Title already exists. Please select a new project title.

*Action:* If you get this error message, just click **save & close** again to override it.



## Appendix A. 21 – Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils

### **Abstract:**

An advisory council is an important component of AmeriCorps Seniors programs. The concept of an impartial, objective group — separate from the sponsor and project director — giving input to the operation of AmeriCorps Seniors programs has been integral to Foster Grandparents, RSVP, Senior Companion, and Senior Demonstration programs. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of advisory council members can help program directors, volunteers, and council members perform more efficiently.

### **Issue:**

Program directors, volunteers, and council members don't always clearly understand the roles and responsibilities of the advisory council.

### **Action:**

Policy for AmeriCorps Seniors programs is based on legislation defined in regulations published in the Federal Register and expanded in individual program handbooks, and an advisory council must adhere to them. An advisory council has the responsibility to plan, make decisions, and act according to its role as advisor to and supporter of its respective AmeriCorps Seniors programs. According to Campaign Consultation, Inc. (a training and technical assistance provider for AmeriCorps), effective practices for advisory councils include:

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Short- and long-term planning both for its own development and that of the program
- Annual review of its own work and performance
- Familiarity with the Senior Corps program they serve
- Visit one volunteer site annually
- With input by the project director, conduct an annual program evaluation that is submitted to AmeriCorps
- Knowledgeable about the project's place in the community, trends in society affecting the field of service, and focus on long-range issues and solutions
- A clearly defined relationship with the sponsor's board of directors, and regular communication with the board
- Include a reasonable number of members who provide or solicit financial support for the program
- Attract new members to the council

### **Operation of the Council**

- A set of expectations and job descriptions
- Operates under a clear and up-to-date set of bylaws with which all members are familiar

## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A. 21 - Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils**

- Members are elected for specific terms and are limited as to how many consecutive terms they can serve
- The council communicates effectively with the project director
- Members build relationships and work together as a team to accomplish goals
- Members conduct reflects leadership effectiveness (e.g., attendance, participation)
- The council decision-making process is clear and widely known at the committee and council levels
- Advance council goals with a number of standing committees that report back to the council
- Each member of the council is active and serves on at least one standing committee
- Council meetings occur at least quarterly
- Meeting agendas are effectively designed, and members receive them with related background materials in a timely manner in advance of council meetings
- Financial and standing committee reports are given regularly
- The council follows through and completes "old" business

### **Duties of the Chairperson**

Every organization will differ in assigning specific responsibilities to those who chair committees, but universal functions include:

- Recruits committee members and ensures newcomers are oriented
- Organizes and conducts committee meetings, including the following:
  - Determine the agenda: Select the most important things to discuss, make sure they can be handled in the time available, and sequence issues logically
  - Watch the clock: Start on time, move through the agenda efficiently and without rushing, leave time to review decisions made and tasks assigned, end on time
  - Facilitate the discussion: Ensure everyone has a chance to speak, limit those who tend to monopolize discussions, maintain an open and welcoming tone, monitor disagreements — chairperson should act as a good listener, restate important points, synthesize different comments, clarify differences of opinion
  - Ensure that decisions are reached: Sense when enough discussion has occurred, call for a vote.
  - Recognize the contribution of members: Thank members for reports and efforts, acknowledge special accomplishments.
- Contacts absentee members to foster participation and keeps informed on their progress on assigned tasks
  - Represents the committee to the sponsoring agency by reporting the work of members to the larger organization, and in turn, keeps the committee informed about the organization's decisions, resources, and activities



## **AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix A. 21 - Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils**

### **Outcome:**

Campaign Consultation, Inc., reports that when all involved understand the roles and responsibilities of advisory council members, operations and functions of the council are improved, including the following:

### **Administrative Tasks**

- Selecting/evaluating a project director
- Assisting with personnel problems
- Writing of renewal application
- Acting as a "court of appeals" for volunteers
- Instituting effective changes in project policies

### **Programmatic Concerns**

- Developing new volunteer stations/assignments
- Recruiting
- Recognizing volunteers
- Planning and evaluating project impacts and outcomes
- Developing resources

### **Community Relationships**

- Interpreting program to community, serving as spokesperson for the project
- Bringing community feedback to the project
- Developing publicity for the project
- Helping assess community needs
- Developing resources

### **Financial Issues**

- Serving as fiduciary representative of the project
- Ensuring the financial solvency of the project
- Giving personally and fundraising for the project

### **Related Resources:**

[Building an Effective Advisory Committee](#)

### **Citations:**

Campaign Consultation, Inc. (n.d.). *Advisory council member self-assessment*.

## Appendix C.1 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Memorandum of Understanding



### Memorandum of Understanding

ABC County Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program

This Memorandum of Understanding (this “**MOU**”) contains basic provisions, which will guide the working relationship between both parties. It is entered into by and between **ABC County FGP/SCP**, sponsored by **ABC SPONSOR AGENCY** and the following agency and/or entity (the “**Station**”):

**Station Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EIN:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Station Site Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Station email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

The *ABC County* and the *Station* may be referred to herein as the “**Parties.**”

This MOU is effective from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_. This MOU may be amended in writing at any time with the concurrence of both parties and must be renegotiated at least every three (3) years.

### Basic Provisions

#### The ABC County’s Responsibilities

1. Recruit, interview, select, and enroll volunteers in the program. The volunteers will meet the criteria in the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) or the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program (SCP) Federal Regulations for enrollment in the program.
2. Unless otherwise specified herein, conduct and document a criminal history check for all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the FGP/SCP program in accordance with the requirements established for a National Service Criminal History Check by the AmeriCorps.
3. Refer AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP/SCP to the Station. Permit and encourage the Volunteer Station to screen AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers pursuant to established criteria of Volunteer Station.
4. *(If Applicable)* Arrange for pre-service physical examinations for new AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers assigned to the Volunteer Station.
5. Conduct pre-service orientation and ongoing in-service instruction for volunteers.
6. Instruct AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in proper use of volunteer timesheets, reimbursement guidance, and the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP procedures.
7. Provide an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP/SCP orientation to the Station staff prior to placement of volunteers and at other times as needed.
8. Initiate publicity regarding AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP.

*Version 2024.2*

Documents are provided as a sample ONLY. Its use is optional and, if used, it should be customized as appropriate. For all appendices, including editable versions of samples and templates, visit the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page.

## AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix C.1 - Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP

### Memorandum of Understanding

9. Furnish accident, liability, and excess automobile liability insurance for enrolled volunteers as required by AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP regulation. The insurance provided by the sponsor is secondary coverage and is not primary insurance.
10. Staff an Advisory Council to AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP. Along with the advisory council, arrange for appeals procedure to address problems arising between the volunteer, the Station and/or AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP.
11. Arrange for appropriate AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP recognition.
12. Coordinate with other volunteer and aging programs in the area to foster effective communication and avoid duplication.
13. Reimburse AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for transportation costs between their home and volunteer station in accordance with AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP policies and availability of funds.
14. Arrange with the Station for meals and/or snacks, whenever possible, for volunteers on assignment.
15. *(if applicable)* Provide photo identification for volunteers if not provided by the station.

### The Station's Responsibilities

1. **(AmeriCorps Seniors FGP only)** In partnership with the project staff, the station staff will develop an assignment plan for each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP and for each child served. The sponsor's representative, and the volunteer must sign the written assignment plan that: identifies the children to be served; the role and activities of the volunteer; the expected outcomes for each child; and addresses the period of time each child should receive such services. Volunteer station staff, AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project staff, and the volunteer will review the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's assignment as well as the impact of the assignment on the child's development.
2. **(AmeriCorps Seniors FGP only)** Assign children with designated special or exceptional needs to each volunteer.
3. **(AmeriCorps Seniors FGP only)** Exclude Foster Grandparents as supervising adults when calculating state-mandated adult-to-child ratios.
4. **(AmeriCorps Seniors FGP only)** Supervise Foster Grandparents at all times while they are performing as volunteers and not leave the Foster Grandparent alone with children. (Supervisor name and contact information on next page.)
5. **(AmeriCorps Seniors SCP only)** In partnership with the project staff, the station staff will develop an assignment plan for each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP and for each client served. The sponsor's representative, and the volunteer must sign the written assignment plan that: identifies the clients to be served; the role and activities of the volunteer; the expected outcomes for each client; and addresses the period of time each client should receive such services. Volunteer station staff, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP project staff, and the volunteer will review the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's assignment as well as the impact on the client's ability to continue to live independent in their home, or the impact of respite for caregiver.
6. **(AmeriCorps Seniors SCP only)** Assign adults with special needs to each volunteer.
7. Provide site specific and special training (i.e. confidentiality training) to the volunteers as needed.

*Version 2024.2*

Documents are provided as a sample ONLY. Its use is optional and, if used, it should be customized as appropriate. For all appendices, including editable versions of samples and templates, visit the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page.

AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix C.1 - Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP

Memorandum of Understanding

8. Furnish volunteers with materials required for assignment. These materials may include station uniform and photo I.D.
9. Assure adequate health and safety provisions for volunteers.
10. Investigate and report any accidents and injuries involving AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers immediately to ABC County. All reports shall be submitted in writing.
11. Specify, either by written information or verbally, that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are participants in the Station's programming in publicity featuring such volunteers. Display an AmeriCorps Seniors placard where it may be viewed by the public.
12. **Reports:** The Station Representative shall:
  - Timesheets: Report volunteer hours on a monthly basis on or before 10th of the following month (Insurance coverage is only effective with verified records of hours served.)
  - Progress Reports: Stations are requested to complete a short bi-annual survey provided by AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP documenting the impacts of services provided by volunteers.
  - Volunteer Performance Evaluations: For each assigned volunteer, stations are required to complete an annual performance evaluation using the template provided by the sponsor.
  - In-Kind Documentation: Provide documentation of in-kind contribution(s) (meals, uniforms, mileage reimbursement, training expenses, physical exams) and verification to help AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP meet its local match of 10%.
11. *(if applicable)* Arrange for annual physical examinations for up to \_\_\_ AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers (including a 20% turnover rate) at \$\_\_\_ per examination. Donor verifies funds are not from other federal sources unless authorized under law. For these volunteers, the Volunteer Station will obtain, and provide the sponsor with a certificate signed by the examining medical professional confirming that the volunteer is capable, with or without reasonable accommodation, to either himself/herself or the children/clients served.
12. *(if applicable)* Provide meals for up to # \_\_\_ volunteers each day and provide a regular accounting to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP of the value of meals provided. Since the value of these meals will be counted as part of the non-federal contribution to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant, the Volunteer Station will ensure that the meals provided and reported to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP are not funded with other federal resources, unless those federal resources are authorized by federal law or regulation to be applied as part of the non-federal share of a federal grant.
13. *(if applicable)* Provide transportation for up to # \_\_\_ volunteers each day and provide a regular accounting to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP of the value of the transportation provided. Since the value of this transportation will be counted as part of the non-federal contribution to the AmeriCorps Seniors grant, the Volunteer Station will ensure that the transportation provided and reported to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP is not funded with other federal resources, unless those federal resources are authorized by federal law or regulation to be applied as part of the non-federal share of a federal grant.

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**Other Provisions**

1. **Separation from Volunteer Service:** The Station may request the removal of an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer at any time. An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may withdraw from service at the Station or from the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP at any time. The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP staff, the Station staff, and volunteers are encouraged to communicate to resolve concerns or conflicts, or take remedial action, including, but not limited to, placement with another station.
2. **AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Letters of Agreement:** For in-home assignments, the Volunteer Station will obtain a Letter of Agreement signed by the person or persons legally responsible for the child served, the Volunteer Station liaison, and the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP liaison authorizing the assignment of a AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP in the child's home, defining the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer activities, and specifying supervisory arrangements.
3. **AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Letters of Agreement:** For in-home assignments, the Volunteer Station will obtain a Letter of Agreement signed by the client, or persons legally responsible for the client served, the Volunteer Station liaison, and the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP liaison authorizing the assignment of a AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP in the client's home, defining AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's activities, and specifying supervisory arrangements.
4. **Religious/Political Activities:** The Station will not request or assign AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to conduct or engage in religious, sectarian, or political activities.
5. **Displacement of Employees:** Ensure that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve in a volunteer capacity. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will not displace nor replace paid or contracted employees, relieve staff of their routine duties or infringe upon the site supervisor's supervisory role with the children (or AmeriCorps Seniors SCP client).
6. **Compensation:** Neither the station nor AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP will request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will not receive a fee for service from beneficiaries.
7. **Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation:** The Station will maintain the programs and activities to which AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are assigned accessible to persons with disabilities (including mobility, hearing, vision, mental, and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) and/or limited English language proficiency and provide reasonable accommodation to allow persons with disabilities to participate in programs and activities.
8. **Prohibition of Discrimination:** The Station will not discriminate against AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, service beneficiaries, or in the operation of its program on the basis of race, color, national origin including individuals with limited English proficiency, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.
9. **Termination of MOU:** This MOU may be terminated at any time by either party by sending written notice of termination of the MOU to the other party. This MOU shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years by the Parties.
10. **Signatures.** By signing this MOU, the Station, through its authorized representative, self-certifies that it meets the requirements necessary to become an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Station.

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AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook:

**For All Stations**

***Volunteer Supervisor [Station Staff]***

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>

Volunteer Station Primary Type: To qualify as an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Station, an agency/office/department must self-certify that it is one of the following:

- Public Non-Profit    Private Non-Profit    Proprietary Health Care Agency    Governmental Agency

**Authorized Signatures**

---

**Authorized Station Representative** **Date**

---

**Project Director [or other sponsor designated representative]** **Date**

# Appendix C.2 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Enrollment Form



<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>
Station(s) _____
Assignment(s) _____
Date Assigned: ____/____/____
Computer Entry: ____/____/____
By: _____

## ABC COUNTY FGP/SCP

### AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEER ENROLLMENT FORM

Please print and complete all sections. Forms with original signatures are required for enrollment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a **criminal offense or misdemeanor**? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If Yes, please attach an explanation of charges, date of offense, and status of the charges on a separate sheet to be included with this application.

<p>Driver's License # _____ State _____ Expiration Date _____</p> <p>AmeriCorps Seniors SCP/FGP provides a mileage reimbursement for travel between home and volunteer site to the volunteers.</p> <p>Will you be claiming a mileage reimbursement for travel to and from your volunteer location? <b>Yes</b> ___ <b>No</b> ___</p> <p><b>If Yes, is a copy of your proof of auto insurance showing active coverage attached?</b> Yes ___ No ___</p>
--

As a AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, you will be covered by accident and personal liability insurance plus a small death benefit while performing volunteer duties. This coverage is automatic and free of cost to you as long as you are an active, enrolled member of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP. Please provide the following information.

**Emergency Contact** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Beneficiary for AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Supplemental Accident Insurance:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**The following information will help AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP match you with a volunteer opportunity:**

Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Experience \_\_\_\_\_

Special \_\_\_\_\_

Skills/Interests/Languages \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience (Current, Past, Preferred) \_\_\_\_\_

Days/Hours Available: Mon\_\_\_ Tues\_\_\_ Wed\_\_\_ Thu\_\_\_ Fri\_\_\_  
Mornings\_\_\_ Afternoons\_\_\_

Do you require any special accommodations or have physical or medical considerations that may impact a volunteer assignment?

**Please indicate if AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP may have permission to use your likeness?**

I hereby grant ABC County FGP/SCP permission to use my likeness in photograph(s)/video(s) in any and all of its publications or on the world wide web, whether now known or hereafter existing, controlled by AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP of ABC County in perpetuity. I will make no monetary or other claim against AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP of ABC County for the use of these photograph(s)/video(s).

I do not give permission to use my likeness in photograph(s)/video(s) to ABC County FGP/SCP.

**Certifications**

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the following statements:**

- I hereby state that I am 55 years of age or older and offer my services as a volunteer for the ABC County FGP/SCP Program. I understand that I am not an employee of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Project, the sponsor, ABC County, the volunteer station or the Federal Government.
- I understand that in my capacity as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer I may come into contact with confidential information. I agree to protect this information to the best of my ability and not to disclose it during or after my service as a volunteer has ended.



AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook:

- I understand that if I use my personal automobile in my volunteer service, I will arrange to keep in effect automobile liability insurance equal or greater to the minimum requirements of the state of \_\_\_\_\_. I will also keep in effect a valid [State] Driver's license.

---

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Signature	Date	Staff Signature	Date
--	------	-----------------	------

**Equal Employment Agency** - ABC County FGP/SCP is an equal opportunity Agency. Enrollment is done without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP provides reasonable accommodations to the known disabilities of individuals in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. For accommodation information or if you need special accommodations to complete the application process, please contact ABC County FGP/SCP at (555) 555-1234.

---

Return completed registration to:	ABC County FGP/SCP	For Questions contact:
<b>[Original Signatures Required on the Form]</b>	PO Box 123 Our Town, USA 12345	Jane Doe (555) 555-1234 <a href="mailto:FGP/SCP.PD@abccounty.gov">FGP/SCP.PD@abccounty.gov</a>

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# Appendix C.3 – AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Timesheet and Mileage Reimbursement Request

## TIMESHEET and MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 123, Our Town, USA 81234  
 Telephone: (555) 555-1234

**Physical Address:** 123 State Street, Our Town, USA 81234  
 Fax: (555) 555-5555

**Return to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Office by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month**

Volunteer Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Station Name \_\_\_\_\_ Auto Insurance Information on File? **Y** or **N**

Date	Volunteer Assignment	# of Hours	^Start Odometer	^End Odometer	Auto miles	*Meals	*Enter MP if you a meal was provided while serving, BB if you brought a brown bag meal or the actual expense if you paid for a meal and request reimbursement. Leave blank if no meal is received. Meals will be reimbursed consistent with sponsor policy. ^Enter actual start and stop odometer readings for each trip.
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							<b>IMPORTANT!</b> Please obtain your volunteer station supervisor's original signature before submitting!
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							<b>For Office Use Only:</b>  Mileage Reimbursement _____ miles X _____ per mile =  Total Reimbursement:  <b>\$</b>
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
<b>TOTALS</b>							

**VOLUNTEER:** By signing below, I certify that this statement and the amount claimed are true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I possessed a valid driver's license and that liability insurance in the minimum amount required by law was in

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AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook:

force at the time of this travel. **STATION SUPERVISOR:** By signing below, I certify that to the best of my knowledge this claim is correct and true.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature      Date

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Station Supervisor Signature      Date

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature      Date

## Appendix C.4 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Project Director Job Description

### **ABC Non-Profit**

#### **AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program**

#### **FGP/SCP Project Director Job Description**

JOB TITLE: FGP/SCP Project Director

REPORTS TO: Executive Director

STATUS: Full Time

#### **POSITION DESCRIPTION:**

Under the general direction of the Executive Director of ABC Non-Profit and AmeriCorps Seniors program policy guidelines, the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Project Director has full-time responsibility for the development and operation of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program; in coordination with the ABC Non-Profit and AmeriCorps Seniors Program Advisory Council.

#### **PROJECT DIRECTOR’S ROLE:**

The AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Project Director is responsible for the daily management of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program. The Project Director functions as a working project manager, actively involved with community organizations, volunteers, and volunteer stations. The Project Director serves as the representative of the sponsor in signing and approving official project documentation, including project reports, memoranda of understanding, and/or letters of agreement for in-home assignments. The Project Director will abide by ABC Non-Profit’s established procedures for internal review and its standard policies and procedures.

The Project Director serves full time or part-time, as negotiated with the AmeriCorps Seniors. The Project Director may participate in activities to coordinate program resources with those of related local agencies, boards, or organizations.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Under direction of the ABC Non-Profit Executive Director, the Project Director’s duties include, but are not limited to:

- a) Plan and develop all phases of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP operations;
- b) Ensure national service National Service Criminal History Check are completed for all covered staff and volunteers in accordance with AmeriCorps Seniors requirements and agency policy;
- c) Assist with hiring, training, and supervising adequate staff to efficiently carry out, maintain and develop operations of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program;
- d) Adhere to and administer personnel policies and procedures for staff consistent with those of ABC Non-Profit;
- e) Provide support, information and materials for coordinators and appraise staff performance according to ABC Non-Profit personnel policies and procedures;

*Version 2024.2*

AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook:

- f) Recruit, select, orient and place volunteers with volunteer stations;
- g) Develop and maintain appropriate fiscal, personnel, program and volunteer records and reports;
- h) Enhance the total efforts of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, where appropriate;
- i) Implement agreed upon performance measure and other AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP grant requirements;
- j) Keep AmeriCorps Seniors Advisory Council members informed and solicit their participation and advice on matters affecting program operations;
- k) Work in cooperation with ABC Non-Profit staff, Advisory Council members and volunteer station staff to obtain resources for programs;
- l) Plan, develop, and implement ongoing public relations opportunities, including social media, in cooperation with ABC Non-Profit;
- m) Arrange for formal and regular recognition of volunteers, organizations and individuals who have contributed to the support of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP;
- n) Assure volunteer orientation, in conjunction with volunteer work stations and staff;
- o) In conjunction with AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP staff, develop and maintain close coordination and relationships with volunteer stations, including development of volunteer assignment plans;
- p) Provide ongoing support to volunteers;
- q) In conjunction with AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP staff, appraise volunteer performance;
- r) Assess appropriateness and/or performance of volunteer stations;
- s) Attend training conferences conducted or authorized by the AmeriCorps Seniors.

**JOB QUALIFICATIONS:**

Bachelor's Degree, training and/or experience in work with those over 55 years of age and volunteers is essential. Flexibility, management skills, computer literacy, and personal transportation are requirements. Experience managing federal grants is preferred. Must have excellent written and oral communication skills necessary for preparing grants, written reports and giving oral presentations and trainings. Ability to attend after hours and weekend meetings/events is required. Regional travel is a requirement of this position.

---

Project Director

Date

---

Executive Director

Date

## Appendix C.5 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Volunteer Information Update

### ABC COUNTY FGP/SCP

*[Enter new or changed information and attach to volunteer registration]*



### ABC FGP/SCP Program Volunteer Information Update

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of Beneficiary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Change in station assignment or volunteer assignment: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other changes:  
Current Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Changes to: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Notes:

Dates of:

- Annual Income Eligibility: \_\_\_\_\_
- Annual Volunteer Performance Appraisal: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Version 2024.2*

## Appendix C.6 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Income Review Form

In order to receive a stipend, an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP, SCP, or SDP must be at least 55 years of age and cannot have an annual income from all sources, after deducting allowable medical expenses, which exceeds the program’s income eligibility guideline for the state in which he or she resides. Annual income is required to be counted for the *past 12 months* for volunteers currently serving and estimated for the *upcoming 12 months* for new volunteers.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

New volunteer  Current volunteer

Marital Status:  Married  Widow(er)  Single  Divorced  Legally Separated

***In all categories below list all sources of income for the volunteer applicant and spouse, if living in same residence.***

Current Income from all sources of Applicant and Spouse, if living in same residence	A. Volunteer’s Monthly Income	B. Spouse’s Monthly Income	C. Total Monthly Income (A+B)		D. Total Annual Income (C x 12)
Social Security	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	x 12 mo.	\$ _____
Pension / Retirement Savings Plan	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	x 12 mo.	\$ _____
Interest / Dividends	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	x 12 mo.	\$ _____
Other: see back for list of other countable income	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	x 12 mo.	\$ _____
<b>COLUMN TOTALS</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	x 12 mo.	\$ _____
Allowable deductions for medical expenses, if any. Please note up to 50% of the maximized qualifying amount can be deducted. See reverse side for examples of allowable medical deductions.					
Health Insurance Premiums	\$ _____	per month	or \$ _____	per year	
Prescription Drugs	\$ _____	per month	or \$ _____	per year	
Doctor visits/medical bills	\$ _____	per month	or \$ _____	per year	
Other allowable medical costs	\$ _____	per month	or \$ _____	per year	
<b>(See back)</b>	\$ _____	Total per month	\$ _____	Total per year	
<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:</b>					
Total Household Annual Income:			\$ _____		
Minus total allowable medical expense deduction:     -			_____		
Equals <b>Total Annual Qualifying Income:</b>			\$ _____		
I certify that the information furnished above is correct and understand that falsification of information may result in my being deemed ineligible to receive a stipend as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in FGP/SCP/SDP. <i>I understand that a knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by a fine or imprisonment or both under Section 1001 of Title 18, U.S.C.</i>					
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>REVIEWED BY SPONSOR STAFF</b>	<b>DATE</b>		

**What is considered income for determining volunteer eligibility?**

**According to Section 2552.44 of the [AmeriCorps Seniors] FGP Regulations and 2551.44 of the SCP Regulations:**

- (a) For determining eligibility, “income” refers to total cash or in-kind receipts before taxes from all sources including:
- (1) Money, wages, and salaries before any deduction;
  - (2) Receipts from self-employment or from a farm or business after deductions for business or farm expenses;
  - (3) Social Security, Unemployment or Workers Compensation, alimony, and military family allotments, or other legally-mandated family support.;
  - (4) Government employee pensions, private pensions, regular insurance or annuity payments, and 401(k) or other retirement savings plans; and
  - (5) Income from dividends, interest, net rents, royalties, or income from estates and trusts.
- (b) For eligibility purposes, income does **not** refer to the following money receipts:
- (1) Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, sale of property, house or car, tax refunds, gifts, one-time insurance payments or compensation from injury;
  - (2) Non-cash income, such as the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm or non-farm housing;
  - (3) Regular payments for public assistance including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - (4) Social Security Disability or any type of disability payment; and
  - (5) Food or rent received in lieu of wages.

**What are allowable medical expenses that may be deducted from income?**

**According to the [AmeriCorps Seniors] FGP Regulations, 2552.43(c) and SCP Regulations, 2551.43(c):**

Allowable medical expenses are annual out-of-pocket medical expenses for health insurance premiums, health care services, and medications provided to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse which were not and will not be paid by Medicare, Medicaid, other insurance, or other third party pay or, and **which do not exceed 50 percent of the applicable income guideline.**

**Examples of allowable out-of-pocket medical expenses include but are not limited to:**

**Health Insurance Costs:**

Private insurance, Medicare/Medicaid premiums, co-payments and deductibles, long term care insurance

**Prescription Drugs:**

Pharmacy program co-payments and deductibles

**Medical Bills for Dr. Visits:**

Included, but not limited to: medical care, dental care, vision care not covered by health insurance

**Other out-of-pocket Medical expenses:**

One-time medical expense: equipment, supplies for dentures, hearing aids, eyeglasses, wheelchairs, canes, etc... Over the counter drugs and supplies not covered by health insurance: pain relievers, antacids, hearing aid batteries, vitamins, non-prescription eye glasses

**When and where are the current income eligibility guidelines published?**

AmeriCorps publishes the annual income eligibility guidelines shortly after the issuance of the HHS Poverty Guidelines, usually in February or early March. When issued, the income eligibility guidelines are posted on the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) grantees page. **The guidelines clarify that for eligibility purposes, income does not include the value of food stamps provided under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended.**

**If you have questions or need further clarification on determining income eligibility, please contact your Portfolio Manager.**

Version 2024.2



## Appendix C.7 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Enrollment Checklist

### ABC COUNTY Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Enrollment Checklist

Name:		Phone:	
Address:			
City:		State	Zip:
Date of First Call:		Date Phone Interview:	
Appointment Date:		Appointment Time:	
How did you hear about Program?			
Comments:			
ID Verification: (Photocopy)		Income Review Date:	
Auto Insurance Expiration:		Auto Insurance Carrier	
NSOPW Date Checked:		NSOPW Result:	No Hits, Approved to serve Hits resolved _____ Not eligible _____
FBI Fingerprint Check Initiated:		FBI Check Results Date:	No Hits Approved Approved w/ Dir CS _____ Not approved w/Dir CS _____
State Check Initiated:		State Check Result Date:	No Hits Approved Approved w/ Dir CS _____ Not approved w/Dir CS _____
Application Date		Enrollment Date	Vol Number
<p><b>Note:</b> Staff should sign and date CHC section check boxes. Steps for completing NSCHC must be in project's written policy.</p>			

**Training:** (Volunteers in training must be accompanied prior to CHC approval.)

Location	Date	Time	Trainer/ Accompaniment

I have considered the results of the National Service Criminal History check in selecting this individual to serve.

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Version 2024.2

## Appendix C.8 – Sample VSY Worksheet

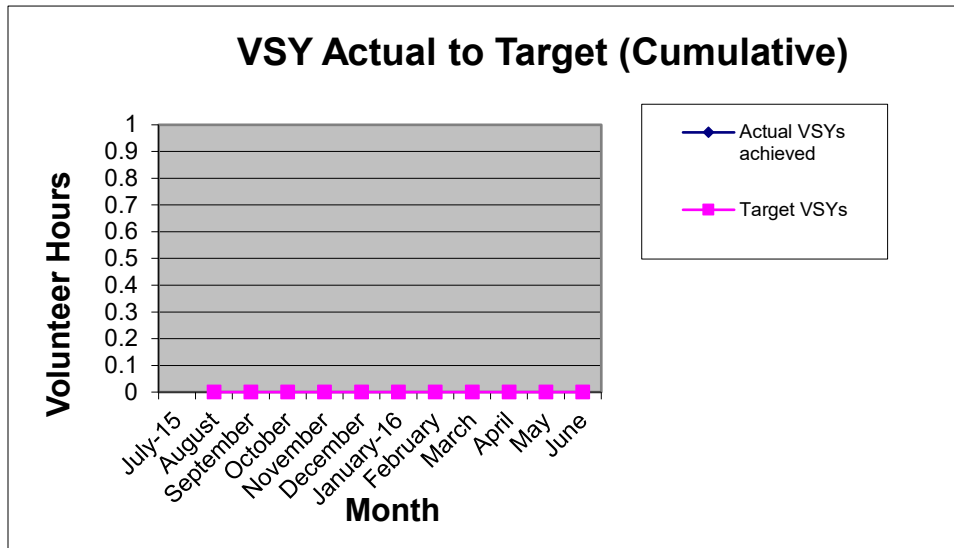
This sample VSY Worksheet is a visual representation of a VSY Calculator that is functional in Excel. See the full list of Handbook Appendices on the [FGP](#), [RSVP](#), [SCP](#), and/or [SDP](#) page for the Excel version.

Month	Cumulative Hours Actual	Cumulative Hours Goal	Monthly VSY Actual	Monthly VSY Goal	Monthly Hours Actual	Monthly Volunteers Active	Annual VSY Goal
July							
August		0					
September		0					
October		0					
November		0					
December		0					
January		0					
February		0					
March		0					
April		0					
May		0					
June		0					
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0</b>		

Total VSYS Achieved

VSY Shortfall=

**0.00**



### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

1. Only enter data into the yellow boxes.
2. Don't enter data in the white, green or the red boxes. They will automatically change as you enter data in the yellow boxes.
3. Use this VSY tracking sheet each month when you tally up the hours of volunteers.
4. This VSY tracking sheet can be adapted if your VSY goals change. Just replace the number of annual VSYS in column H to a new VSY goal number.
5. The graph below will change as you enter data into the yellow boxes.
6. The password for the white, green or red password protected cells is VSY.
7. When password protection is off, be careful not to change the formulas embedded in the white cells.
8. If you turn password protection off, always remember to turn it back on when you are finished entering data.
9. Again: Never enter anything in the white, red or green cells in the spreadsheet below. If you do this, it will erase the embedded formulas

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## Appendix C.9 – AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Volunteer File Checklist

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* Indicate with date that annual review has been completed**

	Date when completed for enrollment	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b><u>Section 1</u></b>							
Volunteer Document Checklist							
<b><u>Section 2</u></b>							
Volunteer Application Form							
** Income Eligibility							
Applicant Statement Background							
Address Certification Form							
Beneficiary Form							
Emergency Contact Form							
Volunteer Enrollment & Ins Form							
Volunteer Release Form/Media							
<b><u>Section 3</u></b>							
NSCHC Documentation Checklist							
NSCHC Component Assessment							
Fingerprints Taken							
Fingerprints Results							
Driver's License/Ins Card							
NSOPR							
State check (s)							
NSCHC Consent Form							
Murder Disclosure							
<b><u>Section 4</u></b>							
Confidentiality Agreement							
Appropriate/Inappropriate Activities							
** Performance Reviews							
Grievance Procedure Signature							
Handbook Received Signature							
Pre-Service Orientation Sign-In							

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# Appendix C.10 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Letter of Agreement for In-Home Assignments



## Letter of Agreement for In-Home Assignment

The **ABC Foster Grandparent Program/Senior Companion Program** has been asked by \_\_\_\_\_ to place

(Volunteer Station)

\_\_\_\_\_ in the home of

(Name of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Address)

The following services are approved by the volunteer station and AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP staff and will be performed by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The volunteer may not be paid for their services. They may not do custodial work or work normally performed by a paid worker.

The Volunteer Station Supervisor for this assignment is: \_\_\_\_\_

The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is requested to serve: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Day(s) of the Week) from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. (Approximate Service Schedule)

*Volunteer services may be terminated by the sponsor at any time upon request of any of the undersigned parties.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor Representative Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Station Representative Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person Served or Legally Responsible Person Date

## Appendix C.11 – Sample TB Test Form

### ABC Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program

Address

Phone:

Email address (or fax number):

*[Note: TB Tests **are not** required by AmeriCorps Seniors but are required by some sponsoring agencies and volunteer stations.]*

### TB Test Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A TB test is required to participate in the ABC Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program. If the volunteer has had a positive TB test in the past, please skip this test and complete the next page.

PPD Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Read: \_\_\_\_\_

# of mm induration: \_\_\_\_\_ Results/Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **PROVIDER INFORMATION REQUIRED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Professional Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital/Clinic/Organization Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**IF PREVIOUS POSITIVE RESULTS SKIP TEST AND GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

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## Appendix C.12 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP-SCP Physical Exam Form

### AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program

[Address]

[Phone/Cell Number]

[Fax/Email]

### Physical Exam Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

This form verifies that a volunteer with AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program or Senior Companion Program has been given a physical examination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Professional Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital/Clinic/Organization Name Date

## Appendix C.13 – Guidance on Social Security Disability

### Overview

The Final Rule, effective on January 31, 2019, includes language that “Social Security Disability or any type of disability payment” should not be included as income for stipended volunteer eligibility purposes (45 CFR 2551.44(b)(4) and 45 CFR 2552.44(b)(4)). More information about disability payments, as well as some considerations for AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, SCP, and SDP sponsors related to these payments, is included below.

### Type of Disability Payments

There are two main Social Security Disability programs: Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These are the largest of the federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. Both SSI and SSDI are administered by the Social Security Administration and both require people with disabilities to meet the criteria to qualify for benefits under each program. However, SSI eligibility is based on an individual’s financial need, while SSDI eligibility is based on an individual’s ears worked and average income earned over those years. In other words, individuals will have had to pay Social Security taxes to receive SSDI benefits. These two Social Security programs differ from regular Social Security Retirement benefits, which are benefits that people receive when they reach a certain retirement age, which is at least 62 years old.

Further, the regulations also specify that “any type of disability payment” should not be included as income. One type of disability payment is a Public Disability Benefit (PDB). A PDB is a benefit paid under a federal, state, or local law or plan to workers for temporary or permanent disabilities. Usually a PDB is not based on a work-related injury or illness and may be given to individuals as periodic payments or in a lump sum. Examples of a PDB include civil service disability benefits, state temporary benefits, and state or local government retirement benefits based on disability (*DI 52125.001 Public Disability Benefits (PDB) - Definitions and Rules for Applying Offset*, Social Security Administration). The overall set of PDBs is one example of a type of disability payment that individuals could receive in addition to the two main federal programs, which also would not be included as income in determining stipended volunteer eligibility. Another example is that some states supplement the federal SSI benefit with additional payments, which could make the benefits higher in those states. State supplemental disability payments vary by state as they use different criteria, but likely would not count as income. If you have a question about whether these types of payments count as income, contact your Program Officer or Portfolio Manager.

Other examples of types of disability payments are disability payments from private sources, such as private pensions or insurance benefits, that don’t affect an individuals’ social security disability payments, which also should not be counted as income as they are a form of disability payments. However, note that workers compensation should be counted as income for eligibility purposes (45 CFR 2551.44(a)(3) and 45 CFR 2552.44(a)(3)).

### Considerations

*What happens when a stipended volunteer reaches Full Retirement Age?*

At full retirement age, currently age 66, both SSI and SSDI payments are converted to regular Social Security retirement benefits. Therefore, AmeriCorps Seniors stipended volunteers in FGP, SCP, or SDP who are age 55-65 may be impacted by this change in benefits. The reason for this potential impact is that, whereas disability benefits should not be counted as income (45 CFR 2551.44(b)(4) and 45 CFR 2552.44(b)(4)), regular Social Security payments are counted as income (45 CFR 2551.44(a)(3) and 45 CFR 2552.44(a)(3)).

For most people, the payment amount will be the same after the SSDI payment converts to a retirement benefit. This is because when an individual claims SSDI, Social Security sets the benefit as though she/he have reached full retirement age (*Will my Social Security disability benefits change when I reach retirement age?*

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AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook:

AARP Social Security Resource Center). There is an exception, however, which is that if an individual, along with SSDI, is receiving workers' compensation or a PDB (described above) from a government job that he or she didn't pay Social Security taxes (e.g. CSRS for federal employees), the additional benefits can reduce the individual's SSDI payment. The reduction will end when an individual reaches full retirement age, so the Social Security benefit would increase at that time.

*What should programs do if they have stipended volunteers receiving disability benefits that convert?*

If sponsors have stipended volunteers that receive disability payments that convert to retirement benefits when they reach full retirement age, they should look at their circumstances on a case-by-case basis as it relates to their income eligibility because there are many factors to consider. For example, a stipended volunteer's allowable out-of-pocket medical expenses (45 CFR 2551.43(c) and (45 CFR 2552.43(c)) may change after their benefits convert thereby affecting their eligibility. Another factor to consider is that once stipended volunteers are enrolled, they will remain eligible to serve and to receive a stipend so long as his or her income does not exceed the applicable income eligibility guideline by 20 percent (45 CFR 2551.43(e) and 45 CFR 2552.43(e)). In other words, if a stipended volunteer has already served for a year before the Social Security benefits convert, she or he may still be eligible with the 20% increase of the income eligibility guideline.

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## Appendix C.14 - Senior Corps Guidance on Accrued Unused Leave for Stipended Volunteers

Rev. February 2016

### **Senior Corps Guidance on Accrued Unused Leave for FGP & SCP Volunteers**

This guidance supersedes all prior guidance issued by CNCS on the subject. This guidance applies to grantees who elect to give “pay outs” to individual Foster Grandparent (FGP) volunteers or Senior Companion (SCP) volunteers for leave they have accrued, but not used by the end of the budget year.

According to the regulations outlined for Senior Companion Programs in 45 CFR § 2551.23(i) and Foster Grandparent Programs in 45 CFR § 2552.23(i), all projects must have a written and consistently administered policy regarding leave.

#### **What is “accrued leave” and how should projects handle accrued leave at the end of the budget year?**

- **Accrued leave is leave that is earned but not used by an FGP or SCP volunteer by the end of the budget year.** <sup>1</sup> **In the policy regarding leave referenced above, grantees should** describe how volunteers accrue such leave, as well as the circumstances under which a volunteer is given a “pay out” for accrued unused leave at the end of the budget year.
- Remember that leave cannot be carried over across budget years.

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<sup>1</sup> Unaccrued leave is entirely different from accrued leave and is not a part of this guidance. Through under-enrollment of FGP or SCP volunteers or volunteer attrition, there may be a portion of the budget that has been set aside for leave that is not accrued by FGP or SCP volunteers over the course of the budget year. These funds may be considered “unaccrued leave”. Such unaccrued leave may not be used to “pay out” stipends or leave to volunteers. Also, such unaccrued leave may not be used for recognition-related expenses.

*Version 2024.2*

**Senior Corps Guidance on Leave as a Form of Volunteer Recognition**

This guidance supersedes all prior guidance issued by CNCS on the subject. This guidance addresses the allowable use of budgeted recognition funds for additional leave awards made to Foster Grandparent (FGP) or Senior Companion (SCP) volunteers.

**A. Can projects award FGP or SCP volunteers additional leave as a form of recognition?**

- Yes. Programs may use recognition funds as leave awards to Foster Grandparent (FGP) and Senior Companion (SCP) volunteers. Such recognition awards are separate and apart from any earned (accrued) leave of a volunteer. The expense associated with such awards must be included in the budget as a recognition cost and may not be drawn from the stipend line.
- The system of granting leave awards is at the discretion of the grantee, but the grantee must ensure that the system is reasonable and commensurate with the volunteer's length of service, etc.
  - Grantees may grant recognition leave in one of two ways: 1) as a percentage based on seniority; or 2) equitably distributed among all FGP and SCP volunteers.
  - Grantees must document all leave awards. Such documentation is a part of the grant records and is subject to the same recordkeeping requirements as all other expenses charged to the grant. Such requirements include classifying the awards as either federal share or match, as appropriate. Specifically, the documentation shall include proper authorization, approvals, and signatures. The records must be complete, accurate and the leave must be awarded within the correct budget period. Documentation supporting leave awards is subject to review by CNCS.
  - Under no circumstances may a leave award be reflected on the volunteer's timesheet as hours served or leave accrued. NOTE: Recording service or leave hours on a volunteer's timesheet that the volunteer did not earn may be deemed fraudulent and is strictly prohibited.

**B. May projects use accrued leave for recognition award purposes?** No. Grantees may not use a volunteer's accrued leave for recognition award purposes, even if the recognition award is intended for the particular volunteer who accrued the leave.

**C. Does leave awarded to a volunteer in the form of a recognition award impact the volunteer's number of service hours.**

- No. Leave recognition awards are not counted towards meeting VSY levels or an individual volunteer's service hours.
- The leave award shall not be accounted for on the volunteer's timesheets.

# Appendix D.1 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Volunteer Assignment Plan



## Assignment Plan

**Instructions:** It is a federal requirement that all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparents Program have an assignment plan for the children with whom they are assigned to work. The children they are assigned to must have documented exceptional or special needs, verified by an appropriate professional. Your organization should retain on file documentation of the verifying professional’s qualifications to assess the children’s needs. The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is assigned to your organization to provide one-on-one assistance and perform activities based on needs of selected children.

Please complete all sections, documenting the child’s needs, the activities you want the volunteer to perform, and the desired results of those activities. The completed assignment plan becomes the volunteer’s “job description.” Please review it with the volunteer to ensure that the required activities and the desired outcomes are understood. Obtain all signatures indicated on page 2 and send to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP project office for approval.

This Assignment Plan should also be used to review the volunteer’s performance as well as the impact of the assignment on the children’s development.

The AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program recognizes and respects the confidentiality of all of the children involved in the program. Please be assured that all of the information that you provide will only be used in aggregate and no specific child will be identified.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Station/Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Schedule: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Period this plan covers: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. List Child’s Name, Age, and Grade (if applicable) and Exceptional or Special Need:**

*Identify the child the volunteer will be working with during the period indicated above.*

If, for reasons of confidentiality, you are unable to provide the full name of the child, please use the first name or a pseudonym. Keep in mind that the Supervisor and Foster Grandparent will need to be able to identify the child.

Child’s Name	Grade	Age	Special or Exceptional Need Choose from the list below and include all that apply.
<i>Example:</i> 1. Anna Smith	N/A	3	SI, HI

**Special or Exceptional Needs:**

- |                                  |  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| AN: Abused/Neglected             | LC: Language/ Communication            | Special Initiatives [E.G.]:         |
| AY: Adjudicated youth            | LD: Learning Disabled                  | CI: Child of Incarcerated Parent(s) |
| DD: Development Delayed/Disabled | PC: Physically Challenged              | CF: Child in Foster Care            |
| ES: Emotional/Social             | PI: In Need of Protective Intervention |                                     |
| FC: In Need of Foster Care       |  |                                     |
| HI: Health Impairment            | SI: Speech Impaired                    |                                     |
| HI: Hearing Impaired             | TP: Teen Parent                        |                                     |
| HY: Homeless youth               | VI: Visually Impaired                  |                                     |
| L: Literacy Needs                | Other: _____                           |                                     |

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AmeriCorps Seniors Operations Handbook: Appendix D.1 - Sample AmeriCorps Seniors FGP Volunteer Assignment Plan

**B. Activities planned with assigned child.** What will the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer work on with the child? *Mark those activities that apply with an X or the child's name or number from Section A.*

	Weekly	2-3 Times a Week	Daily
<i>Example:</i> Comfort/Communicate			X
<i>Example:</i> Help with schoolwork		X	
Assist with cognitive activities			
Comfort/Communicate			
Model appropriate social skills			
Play games/puzzles			
Read or tell stories			
Assist with mobility			
Positive encouragement/redirection			
Share meals/help feed			
Help with emergency drills			
Help with schoolwork			
Other: _____			

**C. Expected Outcomes for the child.** How do you expect that the identified child will benefit? *Mark those that apply with an X or child's name or number from Section A.*

<b>Degree of improvement:</b>	Maintain	Moderate Improvement	High Improvement
<i>Example:</i> Cognitive		X	
<i>Example:</i> Social			X
Cognitive -learning, thinking, etc			
Language –speech, ESL, etc			
Social –friendship, respect, teamwork, etc			
Emotional –self-esteem, control, etc.			
Reading –includes ESL			
Numeracy/Math			
Fine Motor –cutting, drawing, buttoning,			
Gross Motor –walking, throwing balls, etc.			
Self-help			
Conflict Resolution			
Health			
Other: _____			

**I accept this assignment plan:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I certify that I am qualified to attest to the needs described above or have consulted with or reviewed documentation prepared by an appropriate professional who verified the needs, such as, but not limited to, a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, registered nurse or licensed practical nurse, speech therapist, educator, or a member of the professional or executive staff of the volunteer station. I understand that a knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by a fine or imprisonment or both under Section 1001 of Title 18, U.S.C.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Volunteer Station Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I approve this assignment plan:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: FGP Director

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## Appendix D.2 – AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Volunteer Position Descriptions

### **AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer in the Foster Grandparent Program** **Position Descriptions**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparent Program serve children with special or exceptional needs. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve 5 – 40 hours per week, tutoring or mentoring children to improve their intellectual thinking, social/emotional, motor and/or language development skills.

Children with special or exceptional needs may face the following challenges:

Abuse/neglect	Limited English proficiency
Developmental challenges	Learning Challenges
Emotional/social challenges	Low income
Homelessness	Adjudication/system involvement
Medical challenges	Visual and hearing impairments
Speech challenges	Physical challenges
Substance abuse	Teen pregnancy/teen parenting

Volunteers may engage (but are not limited to) in assisting children with activities to build skills such as:

#### **Intellectual Thinking:**

Volunteers helping children with intellectual thinking skills may assist with problem solving, thinking, learning, perceiving, memory, understanding, math, word definition, comprehension, parenting, life skills, etc.

#### **Social/Emotional Skills:**

Volunteers helping children with social/emotional skills may assist with friendship, fairness, loyalty, respect for authority, rules/regulations, self-esteem, depression, coping skills, controlling emotions, etc.

#### **Motor Skills:**

Volunteers helping children with motor skills may assist with cutting, drawing, tracing, coloring, writing, tying shoes, buttoning, crawling, balancing, walking, running, jumping, etc.

#### **Language Development Skills:**

Volunteers helping children with language development may assist with speech and oral language, phonetics, reading, vocabulary, spelling, English language acquisition, etc.

## Appendix D.3 – Previous Change Logs

This table lists all changes made in the 2023-2024 versions of this document. See [FGP- Previous Change Logs 2017-2022](#) for a full list of changes made prior to 2023.

<b>Edits made in (April 2024)   Version 2024.1</b>		
<b>Change Number</b>	<b>Chapter and Page Number</b>	<b>Change</b>
1	Chapter 9 (pg. 73)	Updated language regarding Income Disregard Memo

<b>Edits made in (October 2023)   Version 2023.3</b>		
<b>Change Number</b>	<b>Chapter and Page Number</b>	<b>Change</b>
1		Updated Title 45 CFR hyperlinks throughout document
2	Chapter 2 & 5 (pgs. 17 & 35)	Added additional language regarding negotiation of a less than full-time project director
3	Chapter 2 (pg. 22)	Added additional language regarding alternative trainings if unable to attend an AmeriCorps sponsored event.
4	Chapter 5 & 8 (pgs. 34 & 61-63)	Added clarification regarding NSCHC
5	Chapter 5 (pg. 36)	Defined Authorized Representatives
6	Chapter 6 (pg. 40 and 45)	Added language regarding volunteer stations
7	Chapter 8 (pg. 53)	Added clarification on volunteers residing in geographic service area.
8	Chapter 8 (pg. 57)	Changed information regarding "Twitter" to "X," reflecting new name of website
9	Chapter 10 (pgs. 95-96)	Added information regarding the initiation of amendments

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Edits made in (July 2023)   Version 2023.2		
Change Number	Chapter and Page Number	Change
1.	Chapter 5 (pg. 34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated language for NSCHC enforcement and link to NCHC webpage.</li> <li>Updated list of resources for NSCHC.</li> </ul>
2.	Chapter 11 (pg. 110)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated monitoring activity types</li> </ul>
3.	Chapter 11 (pg. 112)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated resources for monitoring</li> </ul>

Edits made in (April 2023)   Version 2023.1		
Change Number	Chapter and Page Number	Change
1.	Chapter 2 (pg. 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated links to <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions on Lobbying</a> and <a href="#">Partisan Political Activity documents</a>.</li> </ul>
2.	Chapter 6 (pg. 40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed mention on PPR Lite.</li> </ul>
3.	Chapter 10 (pg. 85)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated language in De Minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Cost</li> </ul>
4.	Chapter 10 (pg. 90)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edited dollar amount of VSY and added note to see current NOFA and eGrants for amount of annual stipend amount.</li> </ul>
5.	Chapter 11 (pgs. 102, 113)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed PPR – Lite information as no longer required in FY 2023 grants.</li> </ul>

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