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Topic: Effective practices for SCP grants management.
Summary: This document provides ideas and suggestions for effective practices in operating and managing many aspects of SCP grants.

AmeriCorps Seniors

SCP Operations Handbook

Version: 2022.4 (November 2022)

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CHANGE LOG

This table lists all changes made in the most recent revision of this document. See **SCP- Previous Change Logs 2017-2021** for a full list of changes between 2017 and 2021. See Appendix D. 3 for changes made in 2022.

Edits made in (October 2022)	**Version 2022.4**	
Change Number	**Chapter and Page Number**	**Change**
1	Chapter 2 (pg. 21)	• Added a link to Appendix A.8 Fundraising FAQs to section 2.2.2
2	Chapter 3 (pg. 29–30)	• Added descriptions of anticipated unduplicated/VSYs and anticipated volunteers to the list of elements of a work plan • Clarified how to count unduplicated volunteers/VSYs and total volunteers for work plans in the box titled "Targets"
3	Appendix	• Changed the name of Appendix A.8 in the list of Appendices to Appendix A.8 Fund Raising and AmeriCorps Seniors Grants • Added the full text for Appendix A.8

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PREFACE

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 Senior Companion Program (AmeriCorps Seniors SCP) Operations Handbook (Handbook) provides ideas and suggestions for effective practices in operating and managing many aspects of local AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 Seniors SCP, but the Handbook does not address all issues covered in the regulations. Sponsors and project directors are required to follow the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Federal Regulations, published in Title 45, Chapter XXV, Part 2551, 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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Washington, D.C. 20525
202-606-5000
TTY: (202) 606-3472
www.AmeriCorps.gov

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

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook has been developed for the use of sponsors of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP (Senior Companion Program) projects, including executive directors or their designees, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP Program Regulations, the Terms and Conditions on the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP grantee page of the sponsor's Notice of Grant Award (NGA), or their 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 SCP 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 SCP in the SCP 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 Seniors.

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, CNCS 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 SUSTAINABLILITY 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 age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in RSVP 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 age 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 SCP: 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 providing companionship to ease loneliness and social isolation, assist with transportation and light chores, help to serve as eyes and ears to professionals who can intervene in the case of medical or other deterioration on the part of the clients, and give support to informal caregivers.

- *Goals*

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP provide companionship and support to other adults in need of extra assistance to remain at home or in the community for as long as possible. Achievement of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP's purpose is facilitated by the coordination of the resources of AmeriCorps, the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP sponsor, and the community to fulfill the following goals of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP:

1) Develop opportunities for older people willing to share their experience, abilities, and skills for the betterment of their community and themselves to help older adults in their communities maintain independence and to provide respite for caregivers.
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 SCP 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 SCP

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 and Senior Companion Programs.

While the Foster Grandparent Program was developed in 1965, it was not until 1968 that the Senior Companion Program began as a demonstration project at the Administration on Aging, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, with a goal for low-income older adults to help their more frail peers remain independent in their homes.

In 1971 President Nixon created the ACTION agency to provide coordination of all government sponsored volunteer programs and in 1973, he asked Congress to expand the role of low-income older volunteers to provide person-to-person services and the s Senior Companion Program was officially launched.

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service was established, merging the work and staffs of two agencies: ACTION; and the Commission on National and Community Service. The mission of CNCS at the time 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.

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 the AmeriCorps Seniors Programs. It has the responsibility of keeping the Corporation'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

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

discovered that indicates that there has been waste, fraud, abuse, or any violation of criminal law at a program or at a sub-recipient.

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 OGRSE at 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

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

- Connections to AmeriCorps Social Media sites (Facebook/Twitter/YouTube)

Finding what you need on the AmeriCorps websites:

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

- 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 SCP 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 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

- 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 Flicker 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.

- MLK National Day of Service 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 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

The Grantee and Sponsors page at is AmeriCorps's "one-stop shopping" site for tools, training, and information about volunteering and national service. The Knowledge Network provides quick and easy access to training and technical assistance resources for national service programs.

Following is a summary of available features on the Knowledge Network:

- AmeriCorps Seniors SCP grantee page

  This landing page provides access to the most up-to-date training and technical assistance materials developed for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP program. 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 report, 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 SCP and Senior Companion projects are required to conduct checks on participants and project employees. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP's 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 Seniors 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 Seniors grantees also need to be familiar with documenting in-kind donations, time and activity reporting, generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), AmeriCorps Seniors 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 Senior Companion 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 SCP 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 SCP Financial Management Curriculum introduces you to the basic *financial and accounting requirements and strategies* for 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 financial management easier.

Email serviceresources@cns.gov for Litmos technical support.

AmeriCorps Research and Evaluation

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 Life in America 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.
- 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

The electronic grants system 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

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 2551.21). 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP are in Chapter XXV, Part 2551, which is typically cited as "45 CFR 2551."

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

2.1 ELIGIBILITY, AWARDS, AND SPONSORSHIP

2.1.1 Sponsor Eligibility

The AmeriCorps awards federal AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP projects.

2.1.2 Solicitation of Proposals

When federal AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP grant. Notices are posted at AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities & Resources and at the Funding Opportunities on AmeriCorps website 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. 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.

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 managers 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 2551 Subpart B of the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP regulations. A few key responsibilities are listed here:

1) Focus AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program resources on critical problems that affect frail older adults and other adults with special needs 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 age 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 2551.12). AmeriCorps defines vulnerable populations in its grant terms and conditions to include children age 17 or younger, persons age 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 clients 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 SCP volunteers with:

    a) Assignments that show direct and demonstrable benefits to clients, the community served, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and the volunteer station;

    b) Required cost reimbursements specified in 45 CFR 2551.46, 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 and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training (45 CFR 2551.23(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 Seniors) to accomplish program objectives and manage the functions and activities delegated to project staff for AmeriCorps Seniors program(s) within its control (45 CFR 2551.25(c)). (See Chapter 5, *Project Staff*, for more information).

    b) Establish recordkeeping and reporting systems in compliance with AmeriCorps Seniors requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations, facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports, and cooperate with AmeriCorps Seniors 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 2551.25(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 2551.25(e)).

    f) Establish risk management policies and procedures covering project and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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 SCP grants.

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

All AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP sponsor determines they are no longer able to administer the project they should contact their portfolio managers as soon as possible. The portfolio managers 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 portfolio managers formally giving notice of their decision to relinquish the grant and the effective date of the relinquishment. The portfolio manager will forward the letter to the Director of AmeriCorps Seniors. 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 final project 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 SCP 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 portfolio manager.

2.3.1 Political Activities [45 CFR 2551.121(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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer 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 SCP 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 2551.121(g)]

1) AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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, if it does not use AmeriCorps Seniors 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP.

2.3.3.1 Transportation Assignments

While AmeriCorps Seniors SCP may not provide religious instruction, conduct worship, or proselytize as part of service, volunteers may drive a client or beneficiary to a religious service, provided this activity is part of the volunteer's service activity description. A volunteer may remain with a client who is attending a religious service if the activity is part of the agreed upon volunteer assignment. In other words, if an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer and the client would like the volunteer to accompany the client to a religious service as part of the volunteer's service activity, and if the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer is not responsible for conducting a religious service, the volunteer is not engaged in prohibited activity. The volunteer, though, cannot lead any part of the religious service.

2.3.4 Non-Discrimination [45 CFR 2551.121(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 2551.121(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 2551.121(b) and 45 CFR 1216]

An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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 2551.121(c)]

Under no circumstances may an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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 services of AmeriCorps Seniors 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 portfolio managers.

2.3.8 Nepotism [45 CFR 2551.121(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 2551.45]

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 2551.121(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.

2.4 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 portfolio managers and attending state and regional training events where feasible.

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 SCP 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

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 SCP grantee* web page.

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?

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.

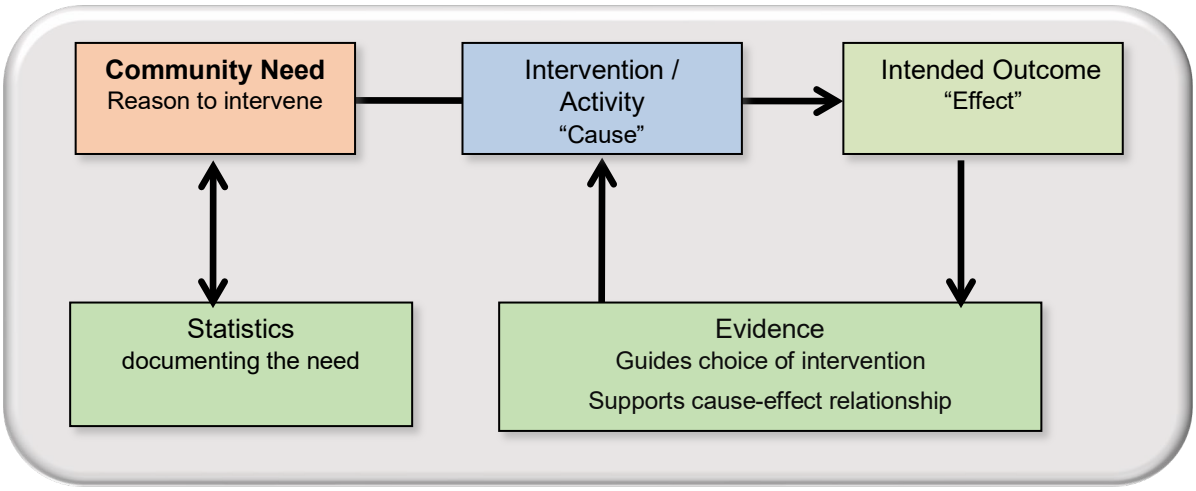
You can also use performance measurement data to spot and correct problems. Are you reaching the population you intended? Do some people require more or less intensive service to show a positive

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 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 *AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantee Resources page*.

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 clearly 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 VSY 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 VSY 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 (VSY) targets:

The anticipated unduplicated field for stipended projects captures VSYs. A single volunteer in a stipended program may serve towards multiple work plans. For example, a volunteer may provide meal delivery to some clients and provide companionship for different clients. Their hours spent delivering meals would count towards one work plan, and their hours spent on companionship would count towards the other work plan. The same hours served may not be counted towards more than one work plan.

To calculate the VSYs, 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 meal delivery and companionship, you would include that volunteer in the Anticipated Volunteer field in the meal delivery work plan and the companionship 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 measures, 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantee page in Resource section . 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:

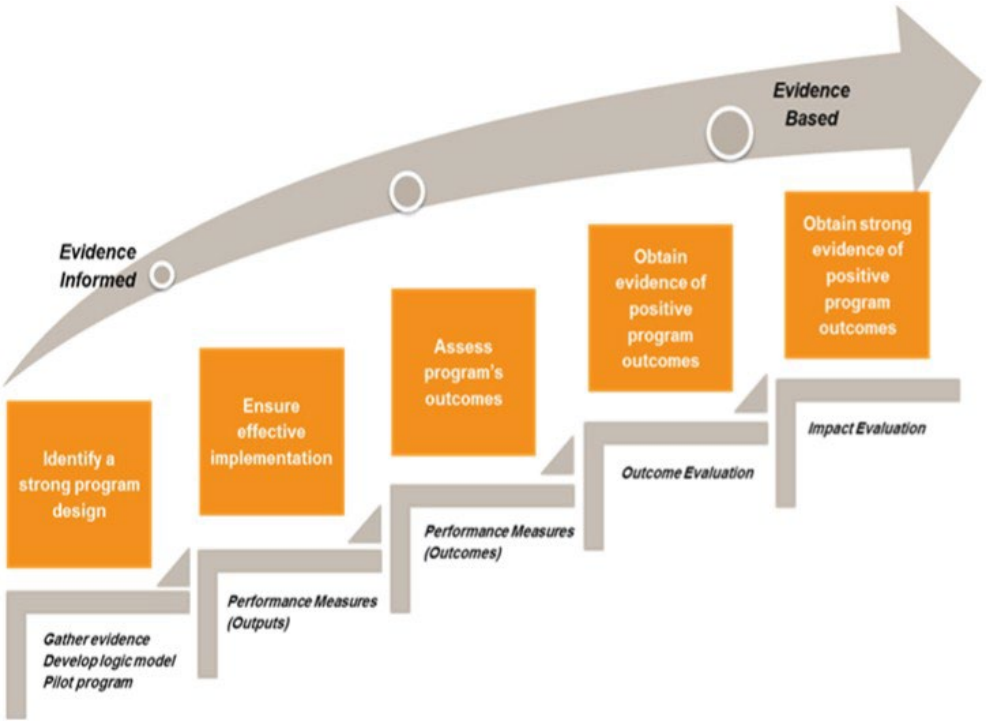
1) Report on progress achieved;
2) Make the underlying documentation of performance available for review; and
3) Report on any operational changes and project improvements that resulted from information learned from the performance data.

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:

- 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantee page.

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, please share with your portfolio manager.

4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

4.1 LOCAL OWNERSHIP

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 2551.24). 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 SCP program regulations (see 45 CFR Part 2551), it is permissible for some or all of the members of that board to also serve on the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 2551.24]:

- 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 an 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 2551.24(a), grantees may expend reasonable amounts to support their activities. Such costs should still meet 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

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 2551.22 and 45 CFR 2551.25]

Hiring of project personnel must be in compliance 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 2551.25 (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 assignments

e) Types of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP placements and assignments (more project staff time is sometimes needed to administer and monitor AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP within home assignments)

f) Specific needs of the clients 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 SCP 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 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 Seniors SCP projects.
- Non-AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can be budgeted as in-kind contributions for necessary project operational functions.
- For information on how some AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may be able to engage in indirect service activities designed to strengthen the project and to support AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers that are engaged in direct service, see Chapter 7.4, on AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program Leaders.

5.3 PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR PROJECT STAFF

The applicable AmeriCorps Seniors SCP program regulations require that project staff be covered by sponsor personnel policies [45 CFR 2551.25(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 2551.25(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 portfolio managers 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 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 grants. Individuals in these positions must undergo the process in a timely manner, or the noncompliant grantee may be subject to cost disallowance. Certain parts of the process need to occur prior to charging any staff time to an AmeriCorps 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 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 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 managers 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 Enforcement Guide. Grantees that self-report non-compliance to a monitoring official prior to any written notice of future oversight or monitoring activity (such as IPERA sampling, IG audit or investigation, site visit, desk review, etc.) may receive a reduction in their cost disallowance. 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 Knowledge Network/Criminal History Checks for links to the regulations, requirements, and training materials. Video Training, NSCHC eCourse, FAQs, NSCHC Documentation Checklist is especially helpful to AmeriCorps Seniors grantees.

See May 1 NSCHC Rule Resources for quick summary, Rule Summary, Rule Manual, FAQs, and Rule Interim FAQs.

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 Seniors. 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 Seniors 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 2551.25(c)]

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.

See **Appendix E.2** for a sample position description for a Project Director

i) Keeping AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 performance.

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 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 volunteer in SCP 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.

5.4.3 VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION

5.4.3.1 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 client for assignment to each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.

c) Ensure maintenance of person-to-person relationships between AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP and clients 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 their assignments and the progress of clients 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 client'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 Senior Companion 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

6.1 INTRODUCTION

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are recruited and enrolled by the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP project and placed with or through volunteer stations. Volunteer stations are encouraged to support AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 2551.12).

A. 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].
B. 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).
C. Volunteer stations are located within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application.
D. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP should not be assigned to nursing homes or other long-term care facilities as volunteer stations but may continue to serve an existing client during periods of short-term care in these facilities.
E. Proprietary health care organizations are private, for-profit health care organizations that serve one or more vulnerable populations (45 CFR 2551.12). 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. 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.

6.1.2 Types of Volunteer Stations

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP should be placed with stations where they can provide supportive, individualized services to help older adults with special needs to maintain their dignity and independence.

Potential volunteer stations include but are not limited to the following types of agencies or organizations, if they serve eligible clients as defined in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP regulations(45 CFR 2551.81): **Examples of Volunteer Stations**

Home healthcare agencies	Public health departments including clinics
Private non-profit or proprietary health agencies including clinics	Public and private non-profit social services agencies
Public and private non-profit mental health agencies and associations (non-residential)	Rehabilitation associations and centers
Multi-purpose centers including Senior Centers	Visiting Nurses Associations-

6.1.3 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Project or Sponsor as Volunteer Station

The AmeriCorps Seniors SCP project itself may function as a volunteer station or initiate special volunteer activities provided that AmeriCorps agrees that these activities are in accordance with program objectives outlined in the grant and will not hinder overall project operations [45 CFR 2551.61].

6.1.4 Volunteer Station Cash or In-Kind Support of Volunteers

1) In accordance with ***45 CFR 2551.121(c),*** an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 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 Memorandum of Understanding 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 when completing the PPR Light. 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 AmeriCorps Seniors' SCP grantee webpage.

6.2 VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.2.1 Responsibilities of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer Stations

Individual volunteer assignment plans are required for all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP [45 CFR 2551.72]. Assignment plans are developed by the station in collaboration with the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP project staff. The assignment plan must be approved and signed by the project staff on behalf of the sponsor, station representative, and the volunteer. (See **Appendix E.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 clients to be served;

   b) Document the specific need(s) of the clients;

   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 client 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 in SCP and their clients.

   b) Annually, a review of each AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's impact should be performed, which examines:

   c) The client'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 client.

6.2.2 Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments

Under 45 CFR 2551.62(d) volunteer stations that manage assignments in private homes must obtain a Letter of Agreement describing and authorizing the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer activities in each home. See Chapter 7: AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer 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 24 hours of pre-service orientation and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training (45 CFR 2551.23(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 clients 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

1) Volunteer stations are responsible for arranging AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer travel between different assignments with the same station and for associated costs, unless otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding.
2) Volunteer stations pay all transportation and associated costs for any AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer activities with client such as doctor visits or shopping trips, 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 client and other data needed for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Progress Reports.
    d) Volunteer performance reports.
    e) Testimonials and examples of how AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers meet the needs and improve the lives of clients 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 2551.23(c) (2). (See **Appendix C.1** for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.)

6.3.2 Renegotiating and Updating

The Memorandum of Understanding must be reviewed and renegotiated at least every three years. The effective date of a new MOU must be on or after the date the MOU is signed. The MOU may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. 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 2551.23(c) (2), the MOU 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 in SCP 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 eligible clients.
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 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 Seniors 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 clients 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.

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 Seniors, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP, and the project prior to the placement of volunteers.
B. Communicating to the volunteer stations its policies on the terms and conditions of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer 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;
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' SCP VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS

7.1 CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS

7.1.1 General Criteria

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP projects will develop volunteer assignments in alignment with AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 individualized needs of older clients who have one or more limitations that place them at risk of maintaining their independence.

7.1.2 AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Assignments

Project staff, on behalf of the sponsor, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer, the client (where possible), and/or family caregiver (as appropriate) must concur with each assignment. All assignments must meet the following criteria:

1) Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the population served. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve only adults, primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living.
2) Assignments should include activities that lead to measurable outcome-based results as noted in the Grant Application Guidelines.
3) Assignments may not include administrative support service to the volunteer station.
4) 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 2551.51).
5) 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 clients served.
6) Volunteer stations provide a written outline of duties or description of individual assignments [45 CFR 2551.12(y) and 2551.62]. These should be maintained on file in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 E.2** for a sample AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteer assignment description.)

Appropriate Assignments	Inappropriate Assignments
Accompanying the client to social activities and medical appointments	Activities usually performed by doctors, nurses, or other health professionals
Assisting with activities of daily living such as meal preparation, grocery shopping, offering medication reminders	Brief, casual contact with a large number of clients or leading group recreational or social activities
Providing transportation to social activities or for basic errands	Major household repairs, cleaning and maintenance, or physical labor such as heavy lifting or moving furniture
Reading together or writing correspondence	Advancing funds to clients or depositing cash in banks

Please see **AmeriCorps Seniors Pandemic Recovery a Pathway to Service** **(updated March 2021)** a suggested framework for reopening AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer service opportunities that can help ensure a safe return to volunteering. **Appendix A.17** COVID 19 Resource Toolkit contains general information regarding, safe volunteering, preparing your volunteers to serve during COVID19 and other resources which may help guide you through these unprecedented times.

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 clients. 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 give priority to older adults who have the greatest potential to achieve and maintain independent living. Individuals who live in a private residence (house, apartment, mobile home, etc.) rather than in an assisted living facility, nursing home, or group home are defined as living independently.
3) To the greatest extent possible, preference should be given to assignments where the activities provided by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer actively involves the participation of the client. In the case of respite assignments, the recipients of service, in this context, are those being provided direct services, not the caregiver.

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 clients and their guardians when appropriate.

7.2.1.2 Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments

1) According to 45 CFR 2551.62(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 E.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 Appendix A.17. COVID-19 Resource Tool Kit and A.18. Technology Support Training for additional support on implementation for teleservice activities.

7.2.3 Service to Family Members

Though rare, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer Projects may consider placing an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in service with a family member as a client. Placements between individuals with familial relationships are not categorically prohibited and this extremely sensitive issue deserves careful consideration before moving forward.

First, the volunteer station must have identified the client as a person in need of assistance. Second, the project is responsible for ensuring that volunteer stations treat clients equally in the selection process. Third, each volunteer must have a service schedule outlining days and times served each week and an assignment description that clearly outlines anticipated service activities and expected outcomes for the client. Maintaining clearly defined service schedules and assignment descriptions will help you establish parameters for the volunteers' time spent in service as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.

Finally, you should consider establishing policies that set expectations for both parties who are related in order to maintain the highest degree of confidence that placements such as these meet program rules and regulations. Further, projects should consider all alternative options, diligently document why such an assignment is appropriate, and consider the possible public perception before moving forward.

It is ***strongly*** recommended you discuss such an assignment with your Portfolio Manager before moving forward.

7.3 Assignment Objectives

All required outcome-based assignments should be selected that fit within AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer primary outcome measures in the Healthy Futures focus area. National Service Performance Measurement requirements can be found on the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP webpage.

Available outcomes for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are:

a. H.9A Number of individuals who report having increased social ties or improved capacity for independent living. Service activities in this area may include transportation, companionship, financial literacy, or preventing elder abuse.

b. H.14 Number of caregivers of older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social support. Service activities in this area may include providing transportation, companionship, or preventing elder abuse.

7.4 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Leaders

Sponsors may select current AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, who meet criteria such as exemplary service to their clients, special skills, and leadership abilities, as AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leaders for their projects. In addition to their regular assignment, leaders may spend time assisting newer AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in performing their assignments and in coordinating activities of these volunteers (45 CFR 2551.73). Like AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leaders must have an assignment plan that details the specific activities and outcomes the leaders will accomplish. Unlike traditional AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leaders may engage in indirect service activities designed to strengthen the project and to support the direct service of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

7.4.1 Assignment Plans for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Leaders

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serving as volunteer leaders receive an assignment plan developed by the volunteer station (45 CFR 2551.73(a)). The leader's assignment plan:

- is approved by the sponsor and accepted by the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer;
- identifies the leader's role and activities and expected outcomes;
- addresses the time period of service; and
- is used to review the status of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's services identified in the assignment plan, as well as the impact of those services.

7.4.2 Examples of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Leader Activities

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leaders will engage in activities that builds the capacity of the project in areas such as volunteer recruitment and training in addition to their regular volunteer service with their clients. For example, an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer that also serves as a leader may serve two clients one-on-one regularly, but also be responsible for planning portions of and facilitating sessions of pre-service orientation for new volunteers as they join the program. Or, an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leader may serve three clients as part of their regular volunteer activities and, as part of their leader activities, concurrently recruit new volunteers by regularly going to senior centers and senior housing developments in the community to talk about how to become a volunteer.

Leaders may participate in the following activities:

- Assist with recruitment of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers that engage in direct service
- Mentor and coach new volunteers
- Facilitate volunteer training
- Support overall project planning
- Assist in maintaining relationships with volunteer stations
- Conduct outreach in the community

Leaders may not be assigned any activity that would otherwise be performed by staff or result in the displacement of employed workers (42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq. Sec. 404(a)).

7.4.3 Stipend

A AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leader may be paid a stipend at the same rate as the established AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer stipend for his or her additional hours served as a volunteer leader (45 CFR 2551.73(b)). Additionally, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP leaders, through recognition, may receive an additional monetary incentive (45 CFR 2551.73(c)). The additional monetary incentive should be added to the budget in the "Other Volunteer Costs" section rather than "Stipends" section. Sponsors can find more information on budgeting in Chapter 10 and contact your portfolio managers for instructions and more information if needed.

7.4.4 Monetary Incentive

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Leaders who are income eligible may receive a monetary incentive, through recognition, in addition to the stipend they receive for their regular and ongoing service as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer (45 CFR 2551.73(b)(c)). This incentive should be added to the budget in the "Other Volunteer Costs" section rather than "Stipends" section. See Chapter 10 and contact your portfolio managers for instructions and more information on current policies.

7.5 TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1) When possible, plans should be made to phase out the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer to client 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) The client's need for individual attention through a person-to-person relationship diminishes, and/or an informal support structure of family and friends has been created and the client is no longer socially isolated.
    b) The relationship is no longer satisfying for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.
    c) The client becomes unmanageable due to acute functional difficulties.
    d) The client's condition improves to the point where AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer services are no longer needed.
    e) Conflict between the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and the client or the client's family 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 managers fully informed in cases of terminations, voluntary or otherwise, that have potential legal implications for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP staff or the project.

7.6 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 clients 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 SCP 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 Seniors 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 E.1** for an example of an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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' SCP

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 the frail elderly or adults who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be able to provide such service without detriment to either themselves or the clients served and be willing to abide by the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP program requirements. [Section 211(a) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended; 45 CFR 2551.41(a)]

8.1.2 Non-Discrimination

Eligibility to be an volunteer in AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 2551.41(b)].

8.1.3 Income Eligibility Requirement

To be enrolled and receive a stipend, a 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 2551.43]. Current income eligibility levels – including high costs areas – are posted on the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP grantees website; 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 SCP projects as non-stipended volunteers (45 CFR 2551.101). 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP projects without barriers. Further, AmeriCorps encourages AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 2551.102):

- 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. However, an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP project may not count such contributions as part of the required non-AmeriCorps 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 2551.103). 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 NSCHC requirements, you may go to https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check or contact your AmeriCorps portfolio managers.

8.1.4.1 Role of Non- Stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers

Non-stipended volunteers serving in the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program must serve in the same roles as stipended volunteers. Non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers' assignments must provide support for adults, primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations, that contribute to them maintaining the highest level of independent living. They assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the adults served. Each non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must be assigned to individual adults 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 E.1** for a sample Senior Companion 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 SCP 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 age 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 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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP program. Projects are encouraged to be creative in finding ways to attract men to become AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

5) AmeriCorps Seniors SCP stresses recruitment and enrollment of eligible persons not already volunteering.

6) Recruitment or selection of an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may not be based on any requirement of employment experience or formal education. [45 CFR 2551.41]

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 volunteer 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 SCP 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, Twitter 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.
- Twitter
    - Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets."
    - A service for friends, family, and coworkers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages.
    - Tweets may contain photos, videos, and links to other social network sites.
    - AmeriCorps Seniors Twitter handle: @AmeriCorpsSr
    - AmeriCorps Twitter 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 are 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.
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 clients 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 SCP.
- 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 2551.44, "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, strike benefits, training stipends, alimony, child support, and military family allotments, or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;

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.

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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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. Sponsors must count the value of shelter, food, and clothing, if provided at no cost to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse.

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 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 2551.43(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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP page.

   b) Multiply the guideline for your state by 20%

   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 2551.43-44 for further details

Example: Income Eligibility for a Serving Volunteer

1. Visit the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 2017, 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.

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 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 are in compliance with the requirement***. Grantees should contact their portfolio managers 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 and 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 both AmeriCorps Senior volunteers in SCP and FGP. 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 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 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 managers 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 Enforcement Guide. Grantees that self-report non-compliance to a monitoring official prior to any written notice of future oversight or monitoring activity (such as IPERA sampling, IG audit or investigation, site visit, desk review, etc.) may receive a reduction in their cost disallowance. As a result, it is in an organization's interest to develop a system for monitoring its own compliance.

8.3.7 NSCHC Resources:

AmeriCorps Knowledge Network/Criminal History Checks for links to the regulations, requirements, and training materials. Video Training, NSCHC eCourse, FAQs, NSCHC Documentation Checklist is especially helpful to AmeriCorps Seniors grantees.

See May 1 NSCHC Rule Resources for quick summary, May 1 NSCHC Rule Training, Rule Summary, Rule Manual, FAQs, and Rule Interim FAQs.

8.4 SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICORPS SENIORS SCP

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 volunteers 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:

2) Interest in and ability to develop a supportive person-to-person relationship with older adults and adults with disabilities on a regular basis;
    a) Ability to serve 5 to 40 hours a week;
    b) Willingness to accept professional supervision; and
    c) Flexibility in accepting assignments particularly in private homes.
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 (1) the applicant's identity was verified by examining the applicant's government-issued photo identification card and (2) 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.

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. 3.
    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 AMERICORPS SENIORS SCP

8.5.1 Enrollment Records

1) Once the selection process is completed, the project staff formally enrolls the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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) Projects must keep documentation for the NSCHC process for each volunteer. NSOPW must be completed and documented prior to individual beginning service as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer; documentation showing that the state and FBI checks were initiated prior to individual beginning service; and requirement for accompaniment for individuals with access to vulnerable populations until the project receives state or FBI project results. (Effective May 1, all three 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.) **Please read the NSCHC webpage carefully to be sure your policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance with the requirement.**

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.7 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

6) 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.

7) 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.

8) 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 2551.23(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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer will serve in this requirement.

Meeting the Requirement for New Volunteers: Example

Hometown 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	**4**
Year 2	4	2	2	2	2	0	0	4	2	2**	2***	2***	**24**

*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 station that requires volunteers to receive certain information every September. They also like to recognize outstanding volunteers at an in-service event each summer, in June. 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 find that service opportunities are fewer in the summer months. As a result, they focus their training and in-service during this time, offering a four-hour in-service training 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 of their training between April and September, with four-hour trainings 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
Hometown	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**24**
Neighborhood	**0**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**24**
Township	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**24**
Hamlet	**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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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 individuals they will serve.
- 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 volunteers in in SCP:** 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 Older Adults with Special Needs:** 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 a great opportunity to involve stations and other eldercare specialists. Possible items to address include working with caregivers, protecting older adults from financial abuse or recognizing and responding to early signs of dementia. You could also consider spending time acquainting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with the specific special needs they might encounter among the clients they serve.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Be sure to address your AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 Elder Advocacy:** Explain what you expect of your volunteers when they interact with vulnerable older adults. Depending on your state, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may also have specific responsibilities for reporting known or suspected abuse. At a minimum, you should prepare them to be able to discuss a client's physical and mental health with caregivers and station 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, clients, and caregivers 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 Older Adults with Special Needs:** This could take many different forms depending on your program. If your program provides support to caregivers, consider helping AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers build strong relationships with these caregivers. If it focuses on helping clients remain active and healthy, 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 mean 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 – such as supporting relatives or friends with similar needs or working in teams with other older adults. 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 SCP program regulations on terms of service are found in 45 CFR 2551.51 through 2551.53.

8.7.1 Weekly Hours Requirement

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers shall 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 2551.51]

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.

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, Mealtime, Training, Official Meetings, Recognition

Travel time between the AmeriCorps Seniors' 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. Mealtime may be part of the service schedule and is stipended. Additionally, attendance at pre-service orientation, in-service training, AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 2551.53]

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 clients, 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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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

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 2551.43 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 MOU 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 2551.46] 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. Cost reimbursements may not be 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] See Guidance from the Office of General Counsel - Income Disregard for a memo discussing the provision of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act 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 need not be updated annually and that, once signed, it is effective unless revoked or superseded. This document was most recently updated in 2018.

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 2551.102]

9.1.6 Non-Stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers

Sponsors must provide non-stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer cost reimbursements, except for the stipend, that stipended AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers receive, as they should be treated equally (45 CFR 2551.102(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 managers.

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 2551.12(v)]

The stipend is paid for the hourly service schedule that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers spend with assigned clients, for earned leave if applicable, and for attendance at official project events, e.g., orientation, in-service training, Advisory Council meetings (as members or official observers), 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 2551.45(a) and 45 CFR 2551.52.]

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 2551.46]

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 SCP 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 SCP 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 an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer 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 SCP 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 SCP project. AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 2551.46(e)] Project staff arrange for or assist with the cost of meals for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers during orientation and training.

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 may 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. Written procedures should be in place to outline the project’s reimbursement policy. 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 that 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.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers and Workers Compensation

Volunteers *are not* employees and *are not* covered by Federal or state workers compensation insurance.

45 CFR 2551.45

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 as established by the sponsor in its 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 certify that meals to be reimbursed to the volunteer were taken in conjunction with volunteer service and to provide details of the reimbursement. This documentation must be approved by AmeriCorps Seniors SCP staff and is subject to review for compliance monitoring and AmeriCorps audit purposes. (See **Appendix C.3** for a sample form 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 2551.25(f)]. 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 SCP 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 volunteers 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 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer'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 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 2551.46(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

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.

Seniors 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 SCP.

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 2551.46] 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. AmeriCorps Seniors does not supply volunteer recognition materials, nor does it require specific recognition materials.

2) 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.

3) 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.

4) The AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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.

5) 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.

6) 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 an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may be paid, in a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding when such a proceeding arises directly out of performance of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's activities. 45 CFR Part 1220 sets forth the circumstances under which AmeriCorps Seniors may reimburse for such expenses. Consult the AmeriCorps portfolio managers 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 SCP Program Regulations (45 CFR 2551), the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) as well as the Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps grants. Contact the appropriate portfolio managers for additional technical assistance on fiscal management of an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP grant.

Financial Management Training

An on-line course, "Key Concepts of Financial Management," which can be accessed on Litmos, provides a basic introduction to grants management considerations applicable to all grantees.

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

In accordance with Uniform Administrative Requirements, 2 CFR 200.302, Non-Federal Entities (NFE) that receive AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP Program Regulations. (45 CFR 2551.93(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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Program Regulations (45 CFR 2551.93), 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" share of the budget.

3) Additional requirements in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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.

    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 2551.46(f)]

b) The following insurance costs are not allowable:

1. Public liability insurance for sponsors (except for space that the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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.

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.

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), it may request one. The grantee may contact IndirectCostRate@cns.gov to initiate this process. The 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 that has **never** received a 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 grant Seniors 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
- AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Leader Monetary Incentive
- 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP sponsor is expected to supplement the AmeriCorps Seniors grant with another budget support. The sponsor must raise the amount of non-federal support described in the project funding requirements located in AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Program Regulations 45 CFR 2551.92(e).

2) An AmeriCorps Seniors grant may be awarded for up to 90 percent of the cost of development and operation of an AmeriCorps Senior Companion 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 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

Calculating the Required Non-Federal Share

The required non-federal share for the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion 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**

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 through a link posted along with the respective notices of funding opportunity and application instructions. The justification for the waiver should:

    a. be requested prior to the grant award;

b. include supporting documentation;

c. include the grant period the waiver requested for (e.g. 1st year, 2nd year all years);

d. detail how much of the match needs to be waived (e.g.5% or all of the match);

e. identify what activities on the grantee share would not happen if the waiver is granted.

4) All non-AmeriCorps 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP. [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 SCP 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 started a new three-year project period.

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 VSY:

   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 VSY is calculated by multiplying the number of hours served by the current cost per hour for the stipend (1,044 hours x $3.00 per hour). Each VSY uses $3,132 in stipend funds each year.

3) One VSY does not always equal one volunteer. One VSY is equal to one volunteer only when that volunteer serves exactly 1,044 hours in one year, including leave time. To effectively manage VSYs, you will need to consider the number of hours each volunteer plans to serve weekly based on their set service schedule and project their annual stipend accrual. Over time, you will need to adjust your projections and reconcile them based on actual expenses. The VSY calculator provided in Appendix C.8 may help you manage VSYs and stipend expenditures throughout the year.

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, 2088 hours annually. An individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP may serve up to 2088 hours, or two VSYs, in 12 months. Please review the C.14 AmeriCorps Seniors Guidance on Accrued Unused Leave for SCP & FGP 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 VSY 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) 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 VSY 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 SCP 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 C.14AmeriCorps Seniors Guidance on Accrued Unused Leave for SCP & FGP Volunteers to ensure your policies reflect appropriate regulations.

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 volunteers' time off; or

b) An individual AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's serve 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 #l

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 SCP project is potentially deprived of services that could be provided by AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 managers 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 managers 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 2551.93(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, AmeriCorps 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 managers to develop a case-specific plan. These plans may utilize the same budgetary and non-budgetary remedies described here.

The State Office 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.
- A request for a project director at less than full time.
- 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 managers regarding budget changes, even if pre-approval is not required.

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 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 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 SCP Program Regulations (45 CFR 2551.34).

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.

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.

10.7.2 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 AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager. Grantees need to follow applicable federal, state and local requirements for financial reporting and audits for their type of organization.

10.8 CONCLUSION

Familiarize all staff with AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 AmeriCorps 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 SCP 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;

11 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 11 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 2551.23(2)).
2. Maintain documentation on file, updated annually, that shows that all enrolled volunteers meet the eligibility requirements (Age, Income, NSCHC, etc.) (45 CFR 2551.41 and 45 CFR 2551.42).
3. Ensure there are written assignment descriptions on file for all volunteers (45 CFR 2551.72).
4. Document the eligibility of beneficiaries of volunteer services, preferably in the assignment plan, and maintain these in the volunteer files (45 CFR 2551.81).
5. Retain supporting source documentation for all volunteer local travel reimbursements (45 CFR 2551.46(c)).
6. Ensure all grant funded staff have complete national service criminal history check documentation (45 CFR 2551(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 are in compliance with the requirement (45 CFR 2551(j)). See Chapter 5 and the NSCHC webpage carefully to be sure your written policies and your implementation procedures are in compliance.
8. Ensure that there is clear documentation of how volunteer service hours (45 CFR 2551.51) and other cost reimbursements were tracked (45 CFR 2551.46) and these records are on file.
9. Document receipt and valuation of all in-kind contributions counted toward the required non-Federal share of the grant.
10. Submit all required reports, such as the Federal Financial Reports, Project Progress Reports and make sure they are on time.
11. Document your organization's policies and procedures, including internal financial controls, in a manual or handbook.

11 REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING

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 on 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

How Many Federal Financial Reports Are There?

Projects submit an "FFR" semi-annually to CNCS 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.

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 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.

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

- Keep the portfolio managers 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
  - AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Federal Regulations [45 CFR 2551]
  - 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 the 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) Project Progress Report Annual and Semiannual

The *Progress Report Annual* and *Project Progress Semiannual* are used to ensure AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 after the first six months and 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 SCP grantee page for the *Progress Report Instruction* 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 SCP 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 Seniors 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 2551.25(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:

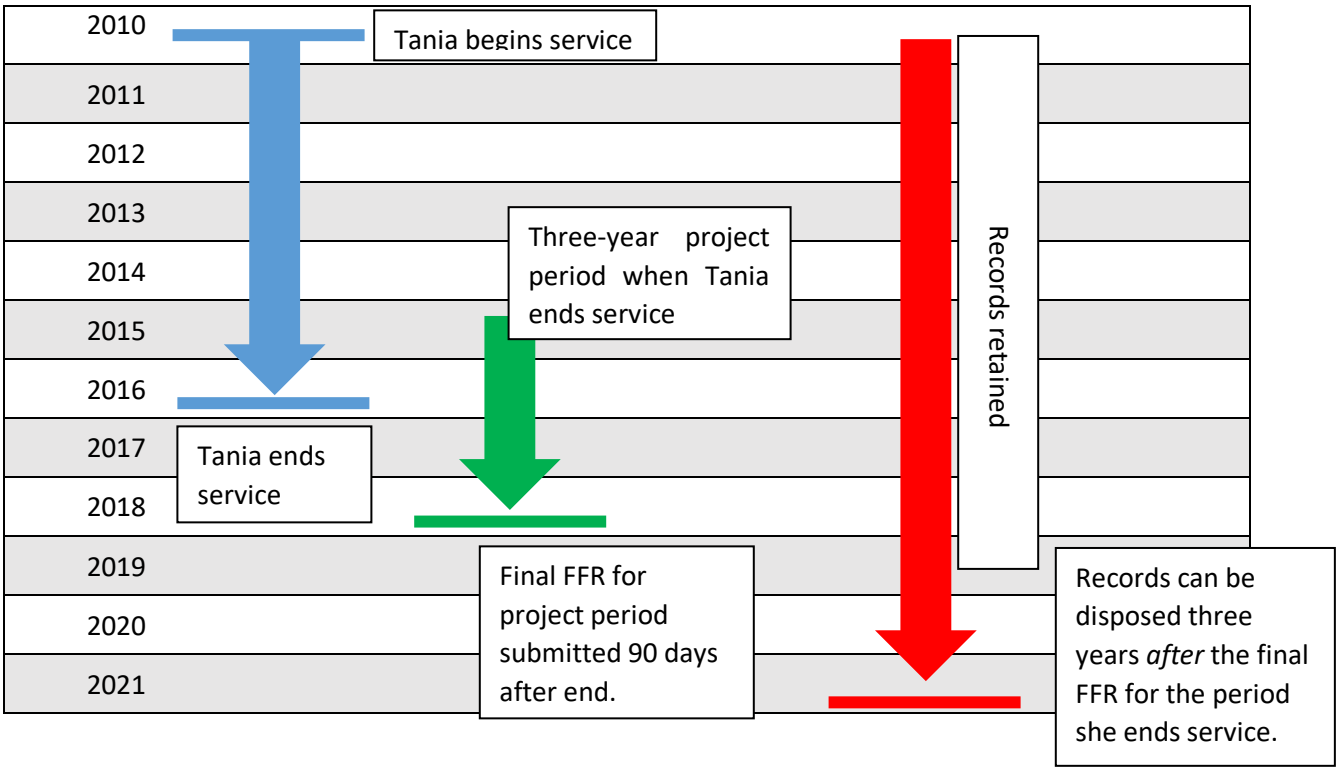
1. A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding. (See Chapter 6 for more information about the MOU)
2. Letters of Agreement, where there are in-home assignments through the volunteer station.
3. A listing by name of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers placed at the volunteer station.

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 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 volunteers 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 another 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 SCP, the requirements apply to anyone receiving any part of their salary from the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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.

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.

> **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.

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 SCP staff. (See **Appendix C.3** for a sample timesheet that incorporates hours of service, and mileage expenses.)

10) Using AmeriCorps Seniors SCP volunteers 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 SCP sponsors as volunteer station see Chapter 6)

11.2.7 Counting and Reporting AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers, Performance Measures, and Other Metrics

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP/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 SCP 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

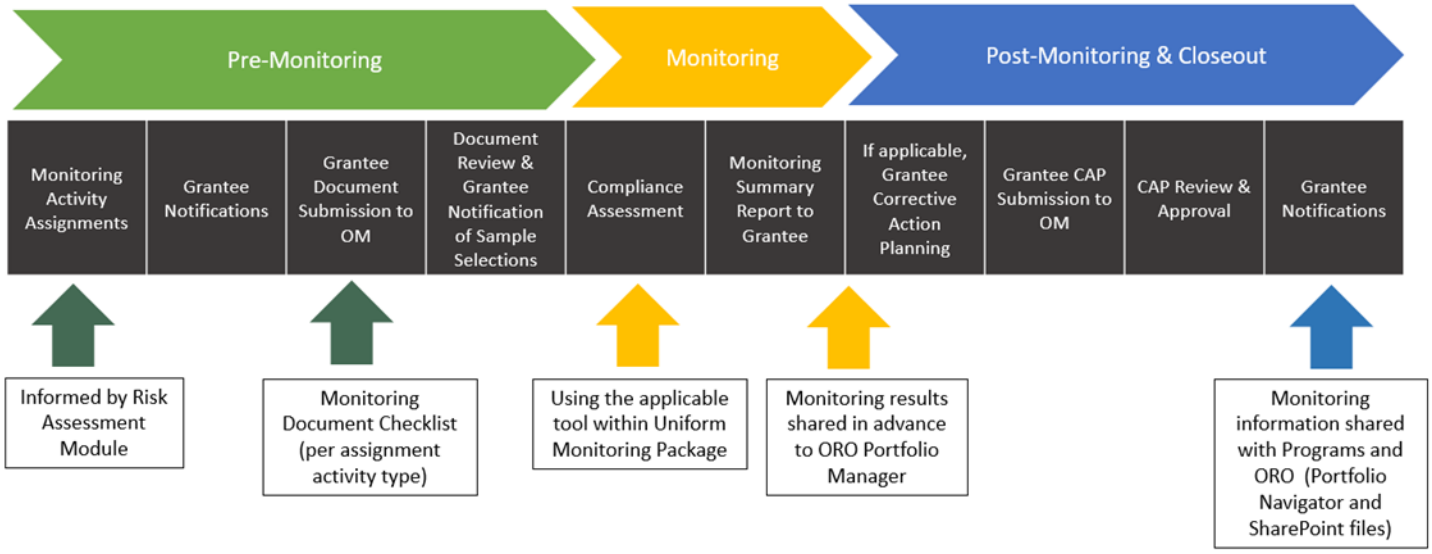
OM uses a Uniform Monitoring Package (UMP) which consists of five issue-based compliance assessments. The UMP can be applied wholly to a grant award or separated to apply one or more of the issue-based compliance assessments, as determined by a grant's risk assessment results. The issue-based monitoring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

- 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 Guide to Enforcement Action.
- 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.

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

- Remote Monitoring - At a Glance
- Overview of Uniform Monitoring Package (UMP)
- Guide to Developing Corrective Action Plans
- Segregation of Duties Worksheet

- List of Subawards Worksheet
- Office of Monitoring FAQs
- Recommendations for Effective NSCHC Policies & Procedures

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. Semi Annual and Annual Progress Report
   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

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, the Social Innovation Fund 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 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP advisory council enhances community interest in project activities. Some AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP is included in the AmeriCorps national advertising program. Through AmeriCorps's Office of External Affairs, 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 External Affairs,* 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 SCP 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 Social Innovation Fund, 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 SCP HANDBOOK CROSS REFERENCE INDEX

URL Links and Appendices Documents by Chapter

This index lists the links and appendices documents that are included in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP 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 SCP Program Regulations: All of the Handbook chapters have links to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. The regulations governing AmeriCorps Seniors SCP are in Chapter XXV, Part 2551, of the Code of Federal Regulations which is typically cited as "45 CFR 2551." Use the reference numbers in the link to find the specific regulation you need. (For example: 45 CFR 2551.22 refers to the *Responsibilities of AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Sponsors*.)

URL for 45 CFR 2551:
http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=99f8e15d953a2684bc6267b117b9713a&rgn=div5&view=text&node=45:4.1.9.11.33&idno=45

Chapter 1	
AmeriCorps NCCC webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-nccc
AmeriCorps Programs webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve
AmeriCorps State & National webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-state-national
AmeriCorps VISTA webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-vista
AmeriCorps Electronic Grants System	https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp
AmeriCorps Communications Resources	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources
AmeriCorps National Performance Measures	http://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
AmeriCorps Strategic Plan	https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/strategic-plan
Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act	https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Summary_Edward_M_Kennedy_Serve_America_Act.pdf
eGrants Helpdesk/ National Service Hotline	https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask
Evaluation Resources	https://americorps.gov/node/249886
Evidence Exchange	https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange
Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships	https://americorps.gov/partner
Federal Register	https://www.federalregister.gov/
Financial Management Resources	https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/manage-your-grant
Foster Grandparent Program webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program
Funding Opportunities Webpage	https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities
Litmos (AmeriCorps' Learning Management System)	https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/
Litmos Self-Sign Up	https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/
Marketing and Media	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources

Media materials	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources
National and Community Service Act of 1990	https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/%40%20National%20and%20Community%20Service%20Act%20of%201990%20%28as%20amended%20through%20PL%20111-13%29.pdf
National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993	https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg785.pdf
National Service Criminal History Checks	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check
National Service in Your State	https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact
National Service Timeline	https://nationalservice.gov/about/who-we-are/national-service-timeline
National Service website	https://americorps.gov/
AmeriCorps website	https://americorps.gov/
Ordering AmeriCorps Publications	https://promote.americorps.gov/
Outreach Resources	https://americorps.gov/newsroom
AmeriCorps Seniors Branding Guidelines	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources
AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program webpage	https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-seniors-senior-companion-program
AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program Regulations	http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45cfr2551_main_02.tpl
AmeriCorps Seniors Programs	https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors
AmeriCorps Seniors Resources landing page	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Social Innovation Fund	https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/social-innovation-fund
Special Initiatives including: ML King Day of Service, SC Week, and more.	https://americorps.gov/partner/partnerships
Terms and Conditions	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
The Knowledge Network	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Uniform Guidance	https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance
Veterans and Military Families	https://dev.americorps.gov/about/what-we-do/veterans
Volunteering and Civic Life in America report	https://data.americorps.gov/Volunteering-and-Civic-Engagement/Volunteering-and-Civic-Life-in-America/spx3-tt2b
U.S. Government Manual	http://www.usgovernmentmanual.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1
Chapter 2	
Davis-Bacon Act	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/construction
Funding Opportunities	https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities
Grants.gov	http://www.grants.gov/
Appendix A.12	Guidance on Fee-for-Service Prohibition
National Service	www.americorps.gov
AmeriCorps website	https://americorps.gov/
Frequently Asked Questions on Lobbying	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/faqs
Frequently Asked Questions on Partisan Political Activity	http://americorps.gov/serve/faqs

Non-Displacement of Employed Workers 45 CFR 1216.1.1 – 1216.1.4	http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&mc=true&node=pt45.4.1216&rgn=div5
Terms and Conditions	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Grant Terms & Conditions and Certifications & Assurances	https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/manage-your-grant
Appendix A.2	Primer on Civil Rights Compliance
Chapter 3	
AmeriCorps Knowledge Network	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
AmeriCorps's national performance measures	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Appendix A.13	Sample Data Sharing Agreement
Evidence Exchange	https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange
AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantees: NOF0, Application, and Application App B	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Appendix A.11	Evidence-Based Programs and Registries
Chapter 4	
Building an Effective Advisory Council	http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/factsheet21.pdf
Chapter 5	
National Criminal Checks Resources	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check
Senior Community Service Employment Program	https://doleta.gov/Seniors/html_docs/PYdirectory.cfm
Chapter 6	
Appendix A.12	Guidance on Fee-for-Service Prohibition
AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantees webpage for Station Roster Instructions	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
Non-Displacement of Employed Workers 45 CFR 1216.1.1 – 1216.1.4	http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c2e77c380debb82b4915f2177fe25633&mc=true&node=pt45.4.1216&rgn=div5
Appendix C.10	Sample Letter of Agreement for In-Home Assignments
Appendix C.1	Sample Memorandum of Understanding
Chapter 7	
The Knowledge Network	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors
Appendix E.1	Sample AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Assignment Plan
Appendix C.10	Sample Letter of Agreement for In-Home Assignments
Chapter 8	
All for Good	http://www.allforgood.org/
National Criminal Checks Resources	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check
National Sex Offender Public Website	www.nsopw.gov
Adult Learning Toolkit	https://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/Adult-Education-Toolkit_Updated_022814.pdf
Facilitating Adult Learning	http://www.nwcphp.org/training/effective-adult-learning-a-toolkit-for-teaching-adults
Appendix C.2	Sample Enrollment Form
Appendix C.5	Sample Volunteer Information Update Form

Chapter 9	
Appendix A.10	AmeriCorps Seniors Minimum Insurance Coverage Requirements
Appendix A.1	Guidance on Recognition Costs
Appendix C.3	Sample Timesheet and Mileage Reimbursement Form
Chapter 10	
Chapter 10 References to 2 CFR:	Link to the 2 CFR which is also called the Uniform Guidance. http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=b9a3c6bc45dc33da0b90c5da0844bfeb&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200
2 CFR Subtitle A Chapter II 200.300 to 200.345	
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	
2 CFR Chapter II Subpart D Section 200.306 Cost Sharing or Matching	
2 CFR Chapter II, Subpart D, Section200.305	
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	http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAmeriCorps/bulletins/1373ea5
Cost Principles	https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Uniform_administrative_requirements_cost_principles_and_audit_requirements_for_federal_awards.pdf
Federal Audit Clearinghouse	https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/Default.aspx
Indirect Costs: Rate Agreements and Cost Allocation Principles	http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance
Key Concepts of Financial Management	https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com?C=335756
PMS-Help and training for grantees using the Payment Management System	https://pms.psc.gov/
PMS login - SMARTLINK	https://pms.psc.gov/
PMS- PSC 272 Report Instructions	https://pms.psc.gov/pms-user-guide/federal-cash-transaction-report.html
SCP Grant Application (AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Grantees webpage)	http://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/SCP
Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-policies/single-audit-act-amendments-1996.html
Terms and Conditions	http://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/SCP

Uniform Administrative Requirements (Uniform Guidance)	https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Uniform_administrative_requirements_cost_principles_and_audit_requirements_for_federal_awards.pdf
Chapter 11	
Sample Privacy and Breach Notification Form	https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Breach_Response_Form.pdf
National Conference of State Legislatures Security Breach Notifications Laws	http://www.ncsl.org/research/telecommunications-and-information-technology/security-breach-notification-laws.aspx
U.S. Department of Education Privacy Technical Assistance Center	https://nces.ed.gov/programs/ptac/Home.aspx
FFR Instructions and Sample Form	https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2021_10_01FederalFinancialReportPDF_OGA.pdf
AmeriCorps Seniors SPC Grantees webpage - Progress Report Instructions	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/scp
National Service Criminal History Check	https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check
National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)	www.nsopw.gov
PMS -Payment Management System	https://pms.psc.gov/
PMS - Frequently Asked Questions	https://dpm-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=DPM
Terms and Conditions	http://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/SCP
Tutorial: Valuing, Documenting, and Recording In-Kind Match	http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/fm_key_concepts_of_cash_and_in_kind_match/view5f46.html?id=3213&chapterid=2270
Appendix C.3	Sample Timesheet and Mileage Reimbursement Form
Appendix A.3	Guidance on Closing Out Your AmeriCorps Grant
Appendix A.6	Volunteer Tracking Software Distributors
Appendix A.14	Sample In-Kind Contribution Form
Chapter 12	
National Days of Service and Special Initiatives:	https://americorps.gov/join
Media kit materials	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources
Public relations materials	https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources

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 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

In the printable version of this handbook, we have included only the appendices that are relevant to your program. In the case of AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Programs, this includes Sections A, C and E. 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. Final Rule Overview
A.16. Final Review FAQs
A.17. COVID-19 Resource Tool Kit
A.18. Technology Support Training
A.19. Respite Survey
A.20. Independent Living Survey

A.21. Disaster and Emergency Response
A.22. Review and Update Project Information in eGrants
A.23. 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 Leave for SCP & FGP Volunteers

SECTION E: AMERICORPS SENIORS SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAMS ONLY

E.1. Sample AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Volunteer Assignment Plan
E.2. Sample Senior Companion Position Descriptions
E.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.
  - 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 alsoabide 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 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.

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:

a. Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors in return for job or service benefits.

b. Unwelcome letters, telephone calls, or distribution or display of materials of a sexual nature.

c. Physical assaults of a sexual nature.

d. Unwelcome and deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching.

e. Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures.

f. Unwelcome pressure for sexual favors or dates.

g. Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions.

h. 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.

— 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:

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.

(1) **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.

(2) **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.

(3) **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@cns.gov, or through http://www.nationalservice.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 "un-liquidated 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 .

3. In the event that you have more than $5,000 in supplies left over from the grant, you must notify your grants officer.

4. 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.

Section	**Tips**
Challenges	**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.** **You might consider highlighting:** • Work Plans/Performance Measurement Challenges/Issues • Station Development • Volunteer Recruitment/volunteer hours ***Do not wait for the progress report if you need support from your portfolio manager.***
Partnership/ Collaboration Development	**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.** **You might consider also highlighting things like:** • Partnerships with other AmeriCorps programs or national service members. • Collaboration connected to National Days of Service or local service activities/events. • Collaboration with local philanthropic organizations, business leaders, other non- profits. Highlight roles, responsibilities and outcomes of partnership.
Non-Federal Share Development	**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.** • If you have received notice of funding awards, please describe the dollar value, name of funder, and *purpose of the funding.* • Submit the award letter as an attachment.

Other Accomplishments	**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.** **You might consider also highlighting things like:** • Impact data that is not reported in the performance measurement work plan. • Policies, systems or status updates pertaining to AmeriCorps Seniors regulations: • AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Annual Safety Check Status • AmeriCorps Seniors (FGP/SCP/RSVP) Accessibility Evaluation/Survey Results • Update to AmeriCorps Seniors program policies or procedures (ex. mileage rates, leave policy, handbooks) • Annual volunteer recognition activity • Advisory Board/Community Assessments Events or activities in which public officials participate. • Social media outreach • Recruitment successes
Impact Stories	**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.** It is helpful if Impact Stories are built using the following template: • Suggested length for stories: 75-200 words • Volunteer's Name • Name of Sponsor, location (City/State) of project • Brief statement of accomplishment • Include statistics, numbers, etc. that demonstrate impact 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.
List of Additional Documents submitted to AmeriCorps	**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.** Suggested additional documents could include: • Evidence of community input (advisory council agenda's, community meeting agenda, etc.) • Updated or adjusted project forms (timesheets, MOU, Volunteer Mileage Forms, etc.) • PR

	○ Local media ○ News articles ○ Feature in the agency or project newsletter • Volunteer Recognition ○ Thank You letters Recognition speeches/comments from Public Officials Demonstration of Impact

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 Submit
SF424- Grant Application (New, Renewal or Continuation)	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.	• **Electronic grants management system** • **Required Documents- submit as directed in the Notice.**
Progress Report	Grantees must prepare the ***Progress Report-Annual*** at the end of the budget period. Grantees will complete the ***Progress Report Semi-Annual- Lite*** 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.	• **Electronic grants management system**
Progress Report Supplement (PRS):	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.	• **Electronic grants management system**
FFR: ***Federal Financial Report to AmeriCorps***	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.	• **Electronic grants management system**
FFR - Final	90 after the end of year 3 of the grant performance period	• **Electronic grants management system**
(HHS PMS) FFR – Cash Transactions Report SF 272	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	• **HHS/PMS**
Re-Budget: ***Revision of budget, changes requiring approval.***	**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.**	• **Electronic grants management system**

Federal Fiscal Year - October 1 – September 30

	Reporting Periods		
Federal Quarter	***Start***	***End***	
Quarter 3	April 1	June 30	July 30
Quarter 4	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 though your portfolio manager.

Leaping Ware (formally VolTrax): www.leapingware.com/index.html

OnCorps Reports: www.oncorpsreports.com

Volunteer Hub: www.volunteerhub.com/

Volunteer Reporter: www.volsoft.com/product/volunteer-reporter/

Volgistics: www.volgistics.com/

Volunteer Spot: www.volunteerspot.com/

For a list of Volunteer Software with Reviews:
www.coyotecommunications.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)
BPMR..... 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.

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	• Raise resources, including in-kind resources, cash donations, or grants, for their project, consistent with the objectives of the project approved in the application • Engage in fundraising for their sponsoring organization's Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion program	• Solicit gifts or donations from participants or beneficiaries in the AmeriCorps Seniors program

Program Type	Allowable as Part of Service	Not Allowable as Part of Service
FGP, SCP, and Stipended SDP		• 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

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 localsources 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?			

_____ _____

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.

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. Examples of evidence-based programs supported by volunteers

This table contains programs developed or adapted for volunteer engagement in which eligible research studies have already been reviewed by a federal agency. It reflects programs identified by AmeriCorps as of 2017 and should not be construed as a comprehensive list of ***all*** evidence-based programs that may potentially be relevant to AmeriCorps Seniors grantees.

Program name & Developer Website[i]	Demonstrated Outcomes	Mode and Duration[ii]	Evidence Review
Across Ages http://acrossages.org	Improved attitudes toward school, future, and elders. Fewer absences from school.	Mentoring by older adult volunteer with students 10 to 13 years old for a minimum of two hours per week. Participants receive 26 weekly 45-minute Social Problem-solving lessons and are engaged in weekly community service and family activities.	For a US Department of Justice (USDOJ) National Institute of Justice-sponsored review of research (2013), see http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=314. See also https://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=209. .
A Matter of Balance www.mainehealth.org/mob	Decreased fear of falling and associated restrictions in activity levels.	Eight two-hour, small-group sessions with eight to twelve participants over four or eight weeks	Impacts were demonstrated with professional leaders and shown to produce similar outcomes using the subsequently-developed lay leadership model. See https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9826971 and https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4410326/
Big Brothers Big Sisters Community-Based Mentoring[iii] https://www.bbbs.org/community-based/	Positive findings for student behavior.	Mentor and young person (age 6-18, predominantly from low-income, single-parent households) meet for two to four times per month for at least a year, and engage in activities of their choosing (e.g., studying, cooking, playing sports). The typical meeting lasts three to four hours.	For a US DOJ National Institute of Justice-sponsored review of research (2011), see http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=112. See also https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/82206

Program name & Developer Website[i]	Demonstrated Outcomes	Mode and Duration[ii]	Evidence Review
Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and variations[iv] https://www.selfmanagementresource.com/	Demonstrated impacts vary by program, but include improvements in healthy behavior, self-reported health, reduced limitation in social roles/activity, and reductions in utilization of medical service.	Weekly, two-and-a-half-hour small group workshop for six weeks, except for: • Arthritis Self-Management - weekly two-hour workshop for six weeks Online Disease Self-Management - log on two to three times per week	See citations in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Evaluation of Community-based Wellness and Prevention Programs (https://innovation.cms.gov/Files/reports/CommunityWellnessRTC.pdf). For a review of research and implementation support for the Spanish-language version of the Diabetes Self-Management Program see: https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/Programa_de_Manejo_Personal_de_la_Diabetes.pdf
Enhance Fitness https://projectenhance.org/enhancefitness/	Improvement in physical and psychological functioning, decreased depression, lower healthcare utilization.	Three one-hour classes per week on an ongoing basis	For a review of research and implementation support, see: https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/EnhanceFitness_InterventionSummary.pdf
Experience Corps www.aarp.org/experience-corps	Improved reading comprehension and teacher assessment of grade level reading skills for students in grades one through three.	Tutoring by older adult volunteers with elementary school students considered at-risk of academic failure. Sessions range in frequency and length— two to four times per week for 25-45 minutes for 35 weeks.	As described in USDOE What Works Clearinghouse single study review: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/67280.
Fit and Strong http://fitandstrong.org	Increases in physical activity, improved lower extremity strength and mobility (risk factors for falls), decreased anxiety and depression.	Three 90-minute sessions per week for eight weeks	For a review of research and implementation support, see: https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017- 03/Fit_and_Strong.pdf.
Healthy Steps for Older Adults www.aging.pa.gov/aging-services/health-wellness/Pages/Healthy-Steps-for-Older-Adults.aspx	Reduced incidence of falls, frequency of self-reported hospital and emergency department use.	Screening, assessment and two-and-a-half-hour workshop (four hours total)	For a review of research and implementation support, see: https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/HSOA-Intervention-Summary-Report.pdf.

Program name & Developer Website[i]	Demonstrated Outcomes	Mode and Duration[ii]	Evidence Review
Jumpstart http://jstart.org	Improvements in oral language and early literacy skills for pre-school age children in under-resourced neighborhoods.	Two-hour, volunteer-led pre-Kindergarten class sessions two days per week for 20 weeks. Each session revolves around a core storybook and skills- based activities. One-on- one child-centered time in classroom.	For a 2015 impact evaluation report of the California Jumpstart College Corps program see http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/evidence-exchange/Jumpstart-CA.
Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) www.npaonline.org	Fewer hospitalizations, nursing home stays and depressive symptoms; better self-reported health compared with nursing-home eligible HBCS participants.	PACE programs coordinate and provide all needed preventative, primary, acute and long- term care services. Participants are transported to a center on average three times a week for therapies and interdisciplinary team care.	For an Administration for Community Living-sponsored review of research (2012) on patient outcomes within the PACE program, see https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/PACE- ADEPP-Summary-2014.pdf.
Reading for Life www.readingforlife.us	Reduced rearrests and arrest counts for prosecuted misdemeanors, felonies, and other offenses.	A diversion program in which juveniles ages 13– 18, who have committed non-violent offenses, study works of literature and classic virtue theory in small groups, led by trained volunteer mentors. Groups meet twice a week for one hour over the course of 10-12 weeks.[v]	For a USDOJ National Institute of Justice-sponsored review of research (2016) on the Reading for Life program, see http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=464.
Reading Partners http://readingpartners. org	Improved sight word recognition, reading comprehension, and fluency for students in grades two and three.	Tutoring by community volunteers with elementary students one-half to two-and-a-half years behind grade level supported by a standard reading assessment, research-based curriculum, full-time site coordinator, and dedicated program space. Tutoring is offered in twice-a-week, 45-minute sessions.	As described in USDOE's What Works Clearinghouse single study review: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/80616. The average student in the impact study received 57 minutes of tutoring per week for 28 weeks.

Program name & Developer Website[i]	Demonstrated Outcomes	Mode and Duration[ii]	Evidence Review
Senior Reach www.seniorreach.org	Reduced isolation and depression and improved physical, social, and mental health functioning of seniors served.	Volunteers are educated to observe behaviors that indicate an older adult may be in need of help. An elder-friendly, telephonic single point of entry (call center) receives referrals and reaches out to seniors in need and arranges a home visit to determine what services are needed.	For a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-sponsored review of research (2012), see http://legacy.nreppadmin.net/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=330
Sound Partners www.voyagersopris.com/curriculum/subject/literacy/sound-partners	Improvements in recognizing the relationship between letters and sounds (phonemic and phonological awareness), reading fluency and comprehension.	Scripted lessons for tutors with minimal training and experience assisting students in kindergarten through third grade with below average reading skills in alphabetic and phonics skills. Uses Bob Books® beginning reading series as one of the primary texts for oral reading practice. Thirty- minute sessions three to four times per week for 25-28 weeks.	The USDOE What Works Clearinghouse summarizes multiple impact evaluations of the Sound Partners beginning reading tutoring program curriculum: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Intervention/440.
Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance http://tjqmbb.org	Improved functional balance, increased mobility, reduced number of falls.	One-hour group sessions, two to three times per month for six months/48 sessions	For a review of research and implementation support, see: https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/TaiChi_InterventionSummary.pdf.
Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (WISE) https://centerforprevention.org/wise/	Improved knowledge and attitudes about aging, depression, alcohol, and medications. Improved health and health care behavior, medication management.	Weekly, two-to-three- hour, small-group sessions for six weeks	For a review of research and implementation support, see: https://www.acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/WISE_ACL_Summary.pdf

Table 2. 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. Follow instructions in the third column to identify programs and practices that received acceptable ratings of evidence.

Agency	Name of registry, web address, & description	Acceptable rating & how to find/filter for it
Institute for Education Sciences (U.S. Department of Education)	What Works Clearinghouse/Find What Works www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc *Description: Summarizes and rates evidence for 150+ educational programs, practices, and curricula, many with cost and contact information.*	Must be supported by a study that meets What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservation and has at least one statistically significant positive finding. In systematic reviews: "Potentially Positive" (+), "Positive" (++), or "Mixed" (+-).
Administration for Community Living (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices www.acl.gov/Programs/CPE/OPE *Description: Contains information on research evidence, implementation materials, cost, and contacts for a dozen programs that can be readily replicated (10-20 pages each).*	All program models listed on this page
Centers for Disease Control (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)	CDC Compendium of Effective Fall Interventions www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/Falls *Description: Highlights 15 exercise and 12 multifaceted programs shown to reduce falls among seniors 60+ (2-4 pages each).*	All program models listed in the compendium
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Evaluation of Community-based Wellness and Prevention Programs https://innovation.cms.gov *Description: Examines Medicaid cost savings from participation in programs promoting physical activity, falls prevention, and chronic disease self-management.*	Program must have at least one "Level 1" study *Evidence for programs is reviewed in* Section 1. Evidence Review Results.
National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Research-tested Intervention Programs (RTIPs) https://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips *Description: Summarizes and rates evidence and replicability for 150+ cancer prevention programs.*	Program must score 4 or higher in "Research Integrity" and "Intervention Impact." *Filter by any criteria*
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)	National Registry of Evidence Based Programs www.nrepp.samhsa.gov *Description: Rates 350+ substance abuse and mental health interventions. Most designed for professional delivery. Search results are divided*	Newly reviewed programs must be "Promising" or "Effective" for desired outcome. Legacy programs must be rated 3+ for desired outcome.

Agency	Name of registry, web address, & description	Acceptable rating & how to find/filter for it
	into two lists--newly reviewed or legacy--depending on when the program was added to the registry.	*Enter keyword and click* Search Now. *Filter results by rating.*
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (U.S. Department of Justice)	Model Programs Guide www.ojjdp.gov/mpg *Description: Summarizes and rates evidence for 250+ programs (from crimesolutions.gov) for juvenile justice and youth prevention, intervention, and reentry outcomes.*	Program must be rated "Promising" or "Effective" *Filter by criteria on left panel. Select* View Effective *or* View Promising *tabs*.
National Mentoring Resource Center (sponsored by USDOJ OJJDP)	Mentoring Program Reviews www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org *Description: Easy access to reviews from crimesolutions.gov for 35+ mentoring programs along with helpful insights on each program, including Experience Corps.*	Program/practice must be rated "Promising" or "Effective"

Table 3. Program evaluation research registries

These registries rate the rigor of *studies* of interest in the areas of strengthening families, labor, national service, and employment readiness. *Having the required rating in column three does not indicate that the program has demonstrated positive results.* The research may have actually demonstrated negative impact for participants. Activate the link provided in column two to go directly to the search page, then follow instructions in the third column to identify studies with experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation designs.

Agency	Name of registry, web address, & description	Required study rating & how to filter search results
Administration for Children and Families (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services,)	Strengthening Families Evidence Review http://familyreview.acf.hhs.gov *Description: Reviews 199 studies and identifies 18 with high and moderate rating. (Does not rate programs.)*	Study must be rated "Moderate" or "High" *At left, in* Study Search Descriptions *box, click on* Study Rating *and select* Moderate *and* High
AmeriCorps	Evidence Exchange www.nationalservice.gov/evidence-exchange *Description: Contains evaluation research reports on models sponsored by AmeriCorps, notably Minnesota Reading Corps (Pre-K, K-3).*	Study must be rated "Moderate" or "Strong." *Open the* Advanced Search *tab. Locate the* Levels of Evidence *criteria and select* Moderate *and* Strong.

Agency	Name of registry, web address, & description	Required study rating & how to filter search results
U.S. Department of Labor	Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) http://clear.dol.gov *Description: Summarizes and rates studies in topic areas such as opportunities for youth disconnected from school and the workforce; women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and saving for retirement.*	Supporting studies must be rated "Moderate Causal Evidence" or "High Causal Evidence" *Select a* Topic Area*, filter by* Study Type: Causal Analysis *and select* Moderate *or* High.

[i] A listing in this table does not constitute endorsement of the program or of products and services offered by program developers.

[ii] Mode and duration are two facets of the program model that may need to be implemented with fidelity. Program developers often require the use of additional implementation materials and fidelity assurance mechanisms.

[iii] The Big Brothers Big Sisters Community-Based Mentoring Program has demonstrated outcomes related to student behavior. ED27 may be used to fulfill National Performance Measure requirements.

[iv] For a comparison of impacts of CDSMP and related chronic disease self-management programs, see: http://www.eblcprograms.org/evidence-based/recommended-programs/chronic-disease-medication-management. Related evidence-based programs include, but are not limited to the Better Choices, Better Health® Workshop, Arthritis Self-Management, Chronic Pain Self-Management, and Online Disease Self- Management.

[v] The Reading for Life program does not regularly require academic engagement outcome data for participants. ED27 or ED6 may be used to fulfill National Performance Measure requirements.

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.

Data Sharing Agreement

This agreement is entered into by and between ____ ("Sponsor") and _____ ("Station").

Duration of Agreement

This Data Sharing Agreement is effective from/through_____ to coincide with current MOU dates. This agreement may be amended in writing at any time with
the concurrence of both parties.

Description of Data

1. Station will track the number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness including but not limited to:

    a. Social Relationships

    b. Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy

    c. Emotional and Behavioral Health

    d. Literacy Skills

    e. Alphabet Knowledge

    f. Early Writing

    g. Numeracy Skills

2. Numbers and Operations Station will utilize _____ ("instrument") found at _____ to collect this information.

3. Sponsor will use this information to fulfill its contractual responsibilities to report on performance to AmeriCorps Seniors.

4. Sponsor may share data with internal and external stakeholders, including:

[List major parties with whom data will be shared, such as volunteers, Advisory Committee, etc.]

Method of Data Access or Transfer

1. Student gains data will be collected by the station for the period of _____to ____ each year.

2. See AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions (available on the FGP, RSVP, SCP, and/or SDP grantees page) and the AmeriCorps National Performance Measurement Core Curriculum for additional information on definitions of key terms and how to calculate/measure data. Further

information is provided in the Sponsor's work plan associated with this performance measure, included as Attachment 1. [Include the relevant work plan(s) as an attachment. Customize the reference as necessary.]

3. Station will share results with Sponsor no later than _____ [date by which data is needed. Include some additional time before it must be reported if possible] by _____ [individual at station responsible for providing data].

Custodial Responsibility

1. Station is responsible for collecting data on children demonstrating gains in school readiness.

2. Station will maintain data collected in a safe and secure manner.

3. Station will share results of data analysis in a timely manner.

4. Station will make available raw data collected to sponsor as requested.

Confidentiality

1. Sponsor and station agree to establish appropriate safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the data and to prevent unauthorized use or access to it.

2. Specifically, Sponsor will:

[Include specific measures you will take, such as limiting access to data to authorized staff and storing records in a secure location, limiting the use of PII in data collection sharing and destroying all PII three years after the child is no longer in a AmeriCorps supported program.]

3. The Station will:

[Include specific measures they will take, as necessary.]

Authorized Signatures

_____

Authorized Station Representative Date

_____

Project Director Date

[or other sponsor designated representative]

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!!

Office Use Only:				
Person Receiving Goods or Services on Behalf of Non-Profit Printed Name		***Organization of My County:***	***Position***	
Signature			***Date Received***	
Accounting Use Only:				
$ _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Value Recorded	***DR/CR Account Numbers***	***Date Entered***	***Data Entry Person***	***JE Number***

Appendix A.15 – Final Rule Overview

Overview

Senior Corps implemented updated program regulations, 45 CFR 2551, 45 CFR 2552, and 45 CFR 2553, in the Federal Register on January 31, 2019. Many of the updates were to reword regulations for clarity and to make technical changes such as numbering. Other updates which more significant to change are highlighted below. [As of September 2020, CNCS and Senior Corps rebranded to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors. CNCS and Senior Corps remains their legal names and reflect so in regulations.]

AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program/ Senior Companion Program

- Reduces the minimum requirement of ongoing in-service training annually from forty (40) hours to twenty-four (24) (45 CFR 2552.23 (f) and 45 CFR 2551.23(f)).
- Removes annual service plan and annual assessment requirements as these processes are duplicative of work required to assess community need for national performance measure requirements (45 CFR 2552.23 (i), (j) and 45 2551.23 (i), (j)).
- Removes annual volunteer physical examination requirement (45 CFR 2552.41(a)(2)/ 2552.46(d) and 2551.41(a)(2)/ 2551.46(d)).
- Clarifies that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, public assistance, child support, and disability payments are not considered income for eligibility verification purposes (45 CFR 2552.44(a), (b) and 45 CFR 2551.44(a), (b)).
- Changes the service hour requirement to volunteers must serve at least five (5) hours weekly or 260 hours annually (45 CFR 2552.51/ 45 CFR 2551.51).
- Removes the Direct Benefit Ratio or “80/20 rule” which required that a sum equal to at least 80 percent of the amount of the Federal share of the grant award shall be expended on cost reimbursements that are provided directly to volunteers such as stipend payments, transportation reimbursements, meals, and recognition (45 CFR 2552.92(e)/ 45 CFR 2551.92(e)).
- Removes the requirement that FGP and SCP projects coordinate with local RSVP projects when enrolling over-income volunteers in FGP and SCP (45 CFR 2552.101/45 CFR 2551.101).
- Revises non-stipend volunteer service requirement to mirror stipended volunteer service requirements (45 CFR 2552.102(e) (f)/45 CFR 2551.102(e) (f)). The new regulations no longer recommend that non-stipended volunteers serve at separate volunteer stations from stipended volunteers and no longer recommend an average weekly service hour requirement for non-stipended volunteers that differed from the requirement for stipended volunteers.
- Removes the requirement to separate any administrative cost related to non-stipend volunteers (45 CFR 2552.104/ 45 CFR 2551.104).

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

- Removes annual service plan and annual assessment requirements as these processes are duplicative of work required to assess community need for national performance measure requirements (45 CFR 2553.23(f)(g)).
- Clarifies cost reimbursements such that recognition and insurance must be provided; meals and transportation may be provided (45 CFR 2553.43).

- Removes language that “no more than 5% of the total number of volunteers budgeted for the project are assigned to it in administrative or support positions” (45 CFR 2553.61).
- Broadens the RSVP performance measurement language (45 CFR 2553 Subpart J).
- Removes language that “no more than 5% of the total number of volunteers budgeted for the project are assigned to it in administrative or support positions” (45 CFR 2553.61).
- Broadens the RSVP performance measurement language (45 CFR 2553 Subpart J).

Appendix A.16 – Final Rule FAQs

Overview

Below are questions and answers related to the AmeriCorps Seniors Final Rule that became effective on January 31, 2019. The following questions were gathered from public comments and clarifications requested; and questions we heard from AmeriCorps Seniors Grantees and Portfolio Manager since the initial notice was posted. You can review the full regulations here.

**In September of 2020 CNCS and Senior Corps will rebrand. CNCS will operate under the working name of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps will become AmeriCorps Seniors. The AmeriCorps Seniors rebranding will take effect on Tuesday, September 29, 2020. Programs will be called AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, RSVP, SCP, and SDP. Volunteers will be called AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. These updates may not be reflected in the regulations posted.*

General- All AmeriCorps Seniors Programs

1. **If a program was in the middle of a grant year when the updated regulations went into effect on January 31, 2019, would it follow the old or new regulations?**

AmeriCorps Seniors programs will follow the new regulations for the entire grant year. Effectively, this means that sponsors may consider the rule retroactively from the start of the grant award. For example, if an AmeriCorps Seniors FGP or SCP program's annual budget period begins in July 2018 (and the final rule is effective in February 2019), then the program will not be required to meet the Direct Benefit Ratio rule for its whole budget year beginning in July 2018.

2. **How long will an AmeriCorps Seniors grantee have to develop new policies that reflect the updated regulations?**

Most of the updated regulations result in a reduction or elimination of rules; therefore, sponsors may create new policies if/when determining that a change is necessary. For those that require immediate change, policies should be in place when updated regulations are effective. For example, updated regulations related to income eligibility rules, such as the changes related SNAP benefits or 401ks, may need policy updates ahead of the effective date of January 31, 2019.

3. **What is the meaning of "vulnerable populations" as used in the definition of proprietary health care organizations (45 CFR 2551.12, 45 CFR 2552.12, 45 CFR 2553.12)?**

AmeriCorps defines vulnerable populations in its grant terms and conditions to include children age 17 or younger, persons age 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.

4. **With the elimination of the requirements to "develop, and annually update, a plan for promoting service by older adults within a project service area" (45 CFR 2551.23(i), 45 CFR 2552.23 (i), and 45 CFR 2553.23 (f)) and "to annually assess the accomplishments and impacts**

the (SCP, FGP, or RSVP) project on the identified needs and problems in the community" (45 CFR 2551.23 (j), 45 CFR 2552.23 (j), and 45 CFR 2553.23 (g)), what are projects still required to do to assess community needs?

AmeriCorps Seniors grantees complete this work when detailing the community needs as part of performance measurement requirements in the grant application. A separate report or plan is no longer required.

5. **Can an exception be made to the requirement that an AmeriCorps Seniors SCP, FGP, or RSVP project director work full-time?**

The language in regulation for all three programs explicitly state that "a sponsor may negotiate the employment of a part-time project director with AmeriCorps when the sponsor can demonstrate that such an arrangement will not adversely affect the size, scope, or quality of project operations" (45 CFR 2551.25(c), 45 CFR 2552.25(c), and 45 CFR 2553.25(c)).

6. **Are sponsors no longer required to compensate project directors at a level that is comparable with other staff positions in their organization?**

AmeriCorps considered the comments received during the public comment period on the proposed rule and added language to the final rule that a sponsoring organization shall "to the extent practicable, compensate project staff at a level that is comparable with similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area" (45 CFR 2551.25(e), 45 CFR 2552.25(e), 45 CFR 2553.25(e). AmeriCorps made this change so that sponsors have the discretion to negotiate with their project staff regarding appropriate compensation levels.

7. **How do these changes affect Senior Demonstration Program (SDP) grants?**

SDP grants are not governed by these regulations, and so, not affected by them directly. However, specific grants may make reference to some aspects of regulation in their Terms and Conditions. Grantees should review their Terms and Conditions and discuss any potential implications with their AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager.

8. **How do these changes affect grants that receive no federal funding?**

Grants that do not receive federal funding, but that are awarded under AmeriCorps Seniors FGP, RSVP, or SCP are subject to that program's regulations. Changes to the regulations that govern those programs apply to these awards as well.

AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program (SCP)/ Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

9. **Is there a maximum stipend level (45 CFR 2551.12(s), 45 CFR 2552.12(v)) and/or can a maximum stipend level be set by projects locally?**

The current definition of "stipend" for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP ensures that stipend amounts are not subject to a specified maximum. In addition, because the amount of the stipend is required to be set nationally, a maximum stipend level may not be set by projects locally.

10. **Are SNAP benefits considered as income for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP volunteer eligibility?**

No, the updated regulations clarify that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, public assistance, child support, and disability payments are not considered income for eligibility verification purposes (45 CFR 2552.44(a),(b)).

11. **I understand that SNAP benefits are not considered income for the purposes of stipend eligibility in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP program. Do I need to take any action with respect to my current volunteers?**

This update to the non-exhaustive list of funds that are not considered income for volunteer eligibility verification purposes clarifies that food and nutrition programs, like the SNAP program, as well as public assistance, child support, and disability payments, are not considered income. In light of this clarification, your local policies and procedures may need to be updated. Moving forward, please update as necessary your local policies and procedures to ensure these types of funds are excluded from consideration in your annual reviews of volunteer income eligibility.

12. **Is a 401(k) considered income for SCP and FGP volunteer eligibility?**

Yes, AmeriCorps has updated the list of what is considered income for purposes of determining eligibility to include retirement savings plan in the updated regulations (45 CFR 2551.44(a)(b), 45 CFR 2552.44(a)(b)).

13. **I understand that a 401(k) is considered income for the purposes of stipend eligibility in the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP program. Do I need to take any action with respect to my current volunteers?**

This update to the non-exhaustive list of funds that are considered income for volunteer eligibility verification purposes clarifies that retirement savings plans, such as 401(k) plans, are considered income. In light of this clarification, your local policies and procedures may need to be updated. Moving forward, please update as necessary your local policies and procedures to include these types of funds for consideration in your annual reviews of volunteer income eligibility.

14. **Does the reduction in ongoing, in-service training hours to a minimum of 24 hours annually (45 CFR 2551.23(f), 45 CFR 2552.23(f) affect the pre-service training requirement?**

No, the expectation that AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP volunteers receive at least 20 hours of pre-service orientation when they begin service continues.

15. **Does the ongoing, in-service training requirement of 24 hours annually need to be conducted monthly?**

No, the requirement is for 24 hours annually and not 2 hours monthly (45 CFR 2551.23(f), 45 CFR 2552.23(f)). Sponsors may determine how to allocate time for in-service trainings during the year to meet the requirement. Additional information on planning and conducting in-service training is found in the Program Operations Handbooks, located on the FGP, RSVP, SCP, and/or SDP grantees page.

16. **Can AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP programs still require an annual physical even though they are no longer required in the new regulations?**

No, programs may not require an annual physical as a requirement for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Programs may, however, provide a physical examination or assistance with the cost of a physical examination prior to assignment and annually thereafter as a benefit for volunteers. AmeriCorps Seniors removed the requirement as it was burdensome and costly and was frequently cited as an administrative barrier to recruitment. However, AmeriCorps recognizes the value of offering physical examinations to volunteers who may not otherwise have the resources or means to obtain them; therefore, this direct benefit is retained as an allowable grant expense. As such, AmeriCorps has added "Physical examination" to the articulated cost reimbursements for AmeriCorps Seniors SCP and FGP in the final rule (45 CFR 2551.46(f), 45 CFR 2552.46(f)).

17. **Will programs be able to set their own requirements for volunteer service hours even though the new regulation now states that the minimum hours are at least five (5) hours weekly or 260 hours annually (45 CFR 2551.51, 45 CFR 2552.51)?**

Yes, projects are still able to set local policies that define hours of service for volunteers. Indeed, because sponsors are able to set local weekly hours of service policies, they may elect to establish the minimum weekly hours of service expected at any level in between the 5-hour weekly minimum and the 40-hour weekly maximum.

18. **Do programs need to abide by both the hourly and annual volunteer service hour requirement, or may they choose one? May they use either the hourly or annual requirement for different volunteers? (45 CFR 2551.51, 45 CFR 2552.51)?**

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.

19. **What if a volunteer goes on medical leave and doesn't meet the requirement of 260 hours annually? In this scenario, is the grantee out of compliance?**

The requirement is a minimum of 5 volunteer hours per week OR 260 volunteer hours annually. Sponsors should set policies that define leave, in accordance with 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.

20. **Do AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP and/or SCP who aren't serving five hours per week due to medical reasons, summer programming, inclement weather, or other reasons need to be put on administrative leave?**

Sponsors should set policies that define leave, in accordance with 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.

21. **How does the change to the service hour requirement (45 CFR 2551.51, 45 CFR 2552.51) affect an AmeriCorps Seniors sponsor's volunteer leave policy?**

Sponsors should set policies that define leave, in accordance with 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.

22. **Is there minimum amount of hours a volunteer must serve each day to receive a meal reimbursement?**

Sponsors set policies locally that define when a volunteer may receive a meal or meal reimbursement.

23. **If a program is in the middle of a grant year when the removal of the Direct Benefit Ratio is effective, on January 31, 2019, can they make adjustments to their budget?**

Sponsors may consider the final rule retroactively from the start of the grant award and may therefore make adjustments to their budget, come February 1, 2019. If the federal share of a grant is greater than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold amount of $150,000 and the grantee's cumulative changes exceeds 10% of the total budget, the grantee must request prior approval to submit an amendment. In addition, a sponsor must request prior approval if seeking to adjust the grant's VSY level, regardless of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

24. **Does the new minimum requirement of volunteer service hours include all stipended hours?**

AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/ SCP volunteers serve 5-40 hours a week for 260-2080 hours annually. Though minimum service hours have reduced, the stipend is still paid for the hourly service schedule that volunteers spend with assigned clients, for earned leave if applicable, and for the attendance at official project evets, e.g., orientation, in- service training, Advisory Council meetings (as members or official observers), recognition events, and travel time between individual assignments.

25. **May sponsors use AmeriCorps funding on any/all administrative cost's related to non-stipend volunteers?**

While the AmeriCorps has eliminated/ reduced requirements related to implementing a project with non-stipended volunteers, federal funding and non-AmeriCorps match funding may not be used to support cost reimbursements for non-stipended volunteers, like meals, transportation, physical exams, etc. With the new regulations, grantees are no longer required to track administrative costs and split out time dedicated to non-stipend volunteers.

AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program (SCP)

26. **What is the impact of the regulation changes related to the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Leaders?**

Overall, the purpose of the regulation revisions related to AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Leaders was to create its own section and consolidate all regulations so that all the references to leaders were in one location and easier to understand (45 CFR 2551, Subpart G). However, there is updated language added to clarify that Senior Companion Leaders, through recognition, may receive an additional monetary incentive (45 CFR 2551.73(c)).

AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

27. **What specifically changed in the definition of the children that AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP can serve?**

The new regulations expand the FGP definition of "Children having exceptional needs" to include "behavioral disorders" and "math and other educational needs" (45 CFR 2552.11(f)).

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

28. **Can an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP project serve as a volunteer station in addition to the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP sponsor?**

Yes, AmeriCorps has expressly stated in the new regulations that AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP sponsors and AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP projects themselves may serve as volunteer stations (45 CFR 2553.61).

29. **Did the performance measurement requirements change for AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP in the new regulations?**

The updated regulations broaden the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP performance measurement language and eliminate certain definitions related to performance measures. (45 CFR 2553 101 – 45 CFR 2553.109). AmeriCorps made these changes to make it easier for AmeriCorps and for sponsors to keep pace with evolving industry standards. AmeriCorps will continue to provide information on performance measures through guidance and training rather than in regulation.

30. **With the elimination of the requirements to "develop, and annually update, a plan for promoting service by older adults within a project service area" (45 CFR 2553.23(f)) and "to annually assess the accomplishments and impacts the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP project on the identified needs and problems in the community" (45 CFR 2553.23(g)), are AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP projects still required to perform annual safety assessments?**

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Sponsors are still required to ensure the safety of their volunteers at volunteer stations (45 CFR 2553.23(v)). Rather than annually assessing the safety of stations via a separate email or report, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP sponsors should maintain an MOU "that states the station will provide for the safety of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the RSVP program assigned to the station" (45 CFR 2553.23(v)).

Appendix A.17 – COVID-19 Tool Kit

The list below provides service activity recommendations to AmeriCorps Seniors grantees that they may consider as service programs restart as they manage their volunteer programs the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources can serve as a guide as you consider new service activities for your program and make plans to reopen safely. AmeriCorps Seniors grantees must prepare and conduct an in-service training for volunteers safely serving during the COVID-19 pandemic, that covers topics such as how to help remain safe during the pandemic, and practices to consider to ensure our beneficiaries remain safe as well.

NOTE: AmeriCorps Seniors strongly recommends that grantees follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reopening guidance, and their own state and county re-opening measures. AmeriCorps Seniors is mindful that each location may be on a different re-opening timeline based on each state's local and specific geographic regions.

AmeriCorps Seniors provides this toolkit as a resource to grantees. The recommendations listed below is by no means an exhaustive list. We encourage you to connect with your local health departments for additional guidance, as needed. This toolkit does not imply endorsement of the information provided on any third-party website, or an endorsement of any third-party product or service.

AmeriCorps continues to provide COVID-19 guidance as it relates to AmeriCorps grants. The guidance can be found on the COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions page. Additional resources to help guide managing AmeriCorps Seniors grants can be found in:

- The FGP, RSVP, SCP, and/or SDP grantees page
- AmeriCorps Seniors Resource Library
- Knowledge Network

COVID-19 Resources AmeriCorps Seniors Programs Should Consider

Item	Resources
Memorandums of Understanding, Policies, and Procedures	- Appendix A.9 of Operations Handbook: Sample Checklist for Station Accessibility - Appendix C.1 of Operations Handbook: Sample Memorandum of Understanding (applicable for FGP and SCP) - Engage Virtually (ACL) - Sample Caregiving Form (CDC) - Volunteering during the COVID-19 Pandemic (American Red Cross) - Staying Safe and Helping Others During COVID-19 (American Red Cross) Many state service commissions may have online resources, for example Guidelines for Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations During COVID-19 (Volunteer Iowa) and COVID-19 Volunteer Resources (Massachusetts Service Alliance)
How to Provide a Safe Volunteer Space	- Using Personal Protective Equipment (CDC) - Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment (CDC) - Addressing PPE Needs in Non-Healthcare Setting (FEMA) - Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 (OSHA) - Guidance for Senior Centers in Planning for Re-Opening (Vermont Department of Health) - Preventing COVID19 spread patient transport (FEMA) - Equipping CBOs To Return to Work: Considerations for the Workforce and Work Place (HHS) - COVID-19 Volunteer Agreement Sample (Buffalo City Mission)
General Information. AmeriCorps Seniors highly recommends that all grantees provide training on safety prior to returning to service during COVID-19. These resources will	- How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings (CDC) - Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (Uniformed Services University) - Articles, including Prolonged Operations in Personal Protective Equipment During COVID-19 (Uniformed Services University) - Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes (CDC) - Cleaning and Disinfecting your Home/Other Places (CDC) - What to do if You Are Sick (CDC) - How to Safely Visit Friends and Family Who are at a Higher Risk of Severe Illness (CDC) - National Indian Health Board COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center (NIHB) - How to Safely Transport Using Your Vehicle (CDC) - Protecting Yourself Using Transportation (CDC)

Item	Resources
assist you in establishing a COVID-19 service training.	- How to Protect Yourself and Others (CDC) - How to Manage Workplace Fatigue during COVID-19 (CDC) - Senior Medicare Patrol Warns of COVID-19 Fraud (NCOA) - HHS Office of Inspector General warns about COVID-19 Fraud Schemes (HHS) - Coronavirus Advice for Consumers (FTC) - Department of Justice Coronavirus Fraud Alert (DOJ) - State and Territorial Health Departments (CDC)
Mental Health	- Coping with Stress (CDC) - COVID-19 Resources (National Center for School Mental Health) - Supporting Staff in these Extraordinary Times (MHTTC) - Helping Seniors Manage Loneliness and Anxiety During COVID-19 (Massachusetts General Hospital) - Coalition to End Social Isolation and & Loneliness (Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness) - Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health (SAMHSA) - National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255 - SAMSHA Toll-free Helpline 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) or Info@samhsa.hhs.gov - Mental Health and Coping (HHS) - Veterans Crisis Line, connects veterans and their families and friends with qualified VA responders. 1-800-273-8255 and press 1
Risk management threshold and metrics to consider	- Risk Management for Your Volunteer Program (Verified Volunteers) - Volunteer management best practices (FEMA) - Emergency Management Best Practices (FEMA)
Training Resources	In addition to AmeriCorps trainings, there are other free resources available which AmeriCorps Seniors grantees can use. - COVID-19 Resources (ACL) - COVID-19 Response Series (Disability: IN) - Learning Center (VolunteerMatch) - COVID-19 Resources for Nonprofits (The Bridgespan Group) - COVID-19 Resources (Independent Sector) - Community Resources (CDC) - Community Resources (AARP) - Partner Toolkit (CMS) - Federal Rural Resource Guide (USDA)

Item	Resources
	- State Service Commissions - Staying Safe and Helping Others (American Red Cross) - COVID-19 Resources (National Council on Aging) - COVID-19 Resources (National Institute on Health)
Safe Volunteer Practices shared by our grantees – Innovative Ideas	**Gateway Community Action Partnership'**s AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent program enabled volunteers to reconnect with each other to offer support. Life Bio, www.lifebio.org, provided free access to an easy to use telephone platform, MyHelloLine, for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in FGP to bridge the cyber gap to reconnect with each other through weekly themed discussions. There was also a Spanish language support session weekly with an English language version. Life Bio made the linkage via phone or computer free to approximately 90 participants during a four-week period that in addition to offering support, helped reduce the sense of isolation, Fifty percent of the program's volunteers participated on the weekly calls. Contact: Natalia Uribe, nuribe@gatewaycap.org **RSVP of Southern Maine** introduced A Volunteer Emergency Response Team (AVERT) to virtually train new volunteers as substitutes for the Meals on Wheels program to continue to deliver meals without interruption. Also trained new volunteers for our Phone Pal (telephone reassurance) program via training webinar and partnered and collaborated with local towns to train volunteers as they establish their own telephone reassurance programs. Additionally, use volunteers remotely to assist with administrative tasks including updating our resource database. Contact: Mary Hadlock, mhadlock@smaaa.org **Computer Buddy** is an email/blog program between students in elementary schools in Dane County and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the RSVP program. Teachers work with students who want to participate in the program. We train the volunteers on how to use the Kid blog email program. The program is easy to use but also it is a secure site and allows the director or the Program Coordinator the ability to look at all communication between students and volunteers. Contact: Diana Jost, djost@rsvpdane.org **Hancock County, Mississippi RSVP** sponsored by the City of Waveland launched a county wide Senior Hotline last week to support seniors across the county during the COVID-19 crisis. For seniors that have limited mobility and transportation that are need of someone to pick up items such as medications, food water and other necessities, can call the Hancock County Senior Hotline to request assistance with errands. Contact: hancockcountyrsvp@hotmail.com or call the RSVP office 228 467-9073 **Knoxville Community Action Agency** AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP shifted their schedules to provide wellness

Item	Resources
	checks and social support to their clients via phone. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and staff collectively call seniors daily to provide wellness checks, information and referral support, and socialization. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have already worked creatively to assist their clients with grocery delivery, medication delivery, helping reschedule doctor appointments, enrolling clients for mobile meals, and connecting folks to mental health support services through these phone visits. Contact: Deisha Finley, deisha.finley@knoxseniors.org I**NCA-RSVP in Tishomingo, Oklahoma** set up a HOTLINE for seniors, disabled and homebound individuals to call for help, food, referrals, mental counsel, etc. and developed a COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM to assemble Senior Disaster Emergency Care Bags. Volunteers deliver these bags to homebound and sheltering-in-place seniors that need basic essentials. Bags include shelf stable food. Volunteers ae also making masks that are distributed to local nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, fire/ems departments and our veteran groups have a Buddy Call list, contacting veterans and their spouses a minimum of twice a week to keep them engaged and active. Contact: Wanda Gray, w.gray@incacaa.org **SEARCH (Seeking Elderly Alone Renew Courage & Hope) RSVP** of Central Maine adapted the transportation program and practices into safe volunteering by transporting clients for essential activities as defined by federal and state directives, such as critical medical appointments, pharmacy and grocery (our volunteers offer to pick up and deliver pharmacy and grocery). The agency provides gloves and masks for volunteers and clients to use. Clients ride in the back seat on the opposite side as far from the volunteer driver as possible. Contract: Cindy Whitney, cwhitney@ccmaine.org **The Friends Program of New Hampshire** has a Foster Grandparent volunteer who has been listening and following along with his middle school students Google Classroom math lessons so he can be ready to assist the students who need extra support. He is striving to be up to date on what they are learning as well as the format they are learning it in, so that he can be of service. **Bone Builder's** classes are trying to meet virtually either through Facebook live streaming, Zoom, or in an email chain. The participants are thrilled to have a vehicle to talk to each other and the larger classes are communicating, sharing notes of inspiration, tips to stay active, and ways to remain healthy while at home. One leader even posted a tutorial on making a homemade mask with items participants would likely already have at home Contact: Lily Wellington, lwellington@fiwndsprogram.olrg

Appendix A.18 – 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: SeniorCorpsHandbook@cns.gov)

- For individual proposals for AmeriCorps Seniors grants, click here.
- Cyber-Seniors: www.cyberseniors.org
- Oasis Lifelong Adventure: www.Oasisnet.org
- GetSetup: www.getsetup.io

RESPITE 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.

1. In a typical week, my Senior Companion Volunteer is with me for	**☒ ☐ hours of respite**

Please turn the page for the questions 2-12

Because I Have a Senior Companion Volunteer assisting with Respite Care …

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2) … I feel less lonely.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) … I feel I have close ties to other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) … I am able to do the things I need to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5) … I am able to do most things I want to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6) … I am more satisfied with my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7) … The person I care for is able to remain at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8) … I am able to get short-term rest and relief.	☐	☐	☐	☒
9) … I am able to find time to run errands.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10) … I am able find time to attend to my personal and health care needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐

11) Overall, I am satisfied with the Caregiver Respite Senior Companion volunteer.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12) Overall, the Senior Companion Program has met my expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐

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 …

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2) … I feel less lonely.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) … I feel I have close ties to other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) … I am able to do the things I need to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5) … I am able to do most things I want to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6) … I am more satisfied with my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7) … I can remain living in my own home.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8) … I am able to get to the grocery store.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9) … I am able to get to medical appointments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10) … I am able to take care of other necessary errands/appointments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11) … I am eating regularly scheduled meals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12) Overall, I am satisfied with my Senior Companion volunteer.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13) Overall, the Senior Companion Program has met my expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix A. 21 – 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 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 of 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.

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 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.

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?**

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 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.

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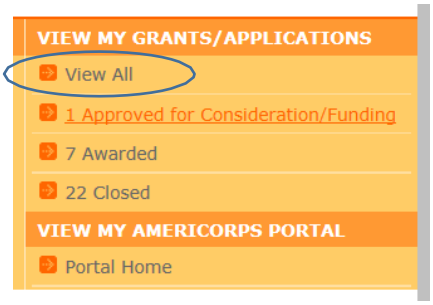
Appendix A. 22 Steps to Review and Update Project Contact Information in eGrants

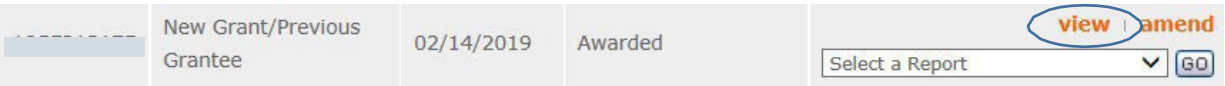
Note: Editing your project's contact information in eGrants does not require an amendment.

Step 1: Log into eGrants



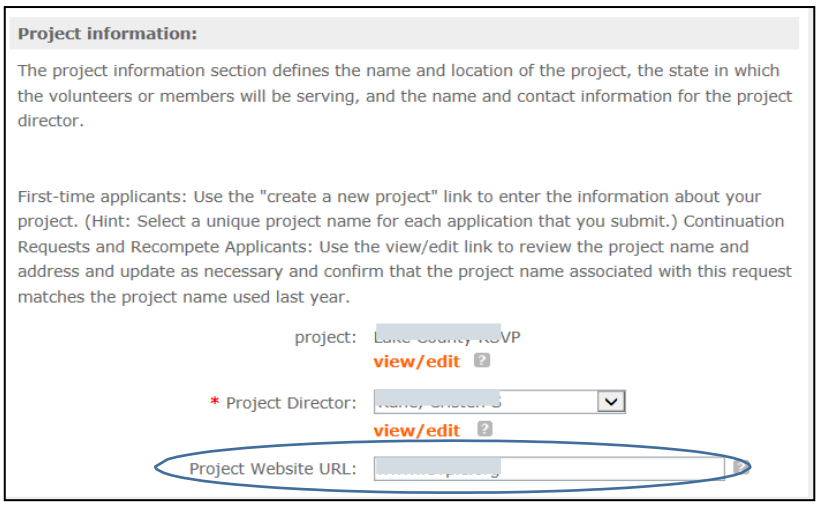
Step 2: Click **View All** to locate your currently awarded grant.

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).

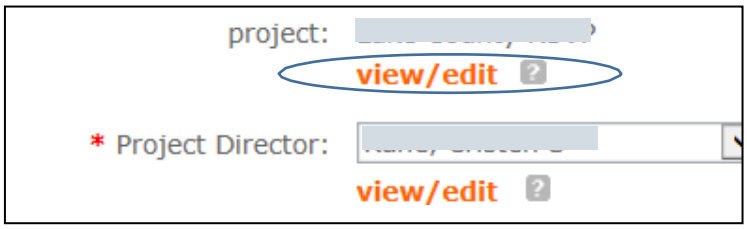


Step 4: In **the** menu on the left side, click **Applicant Info**.

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.



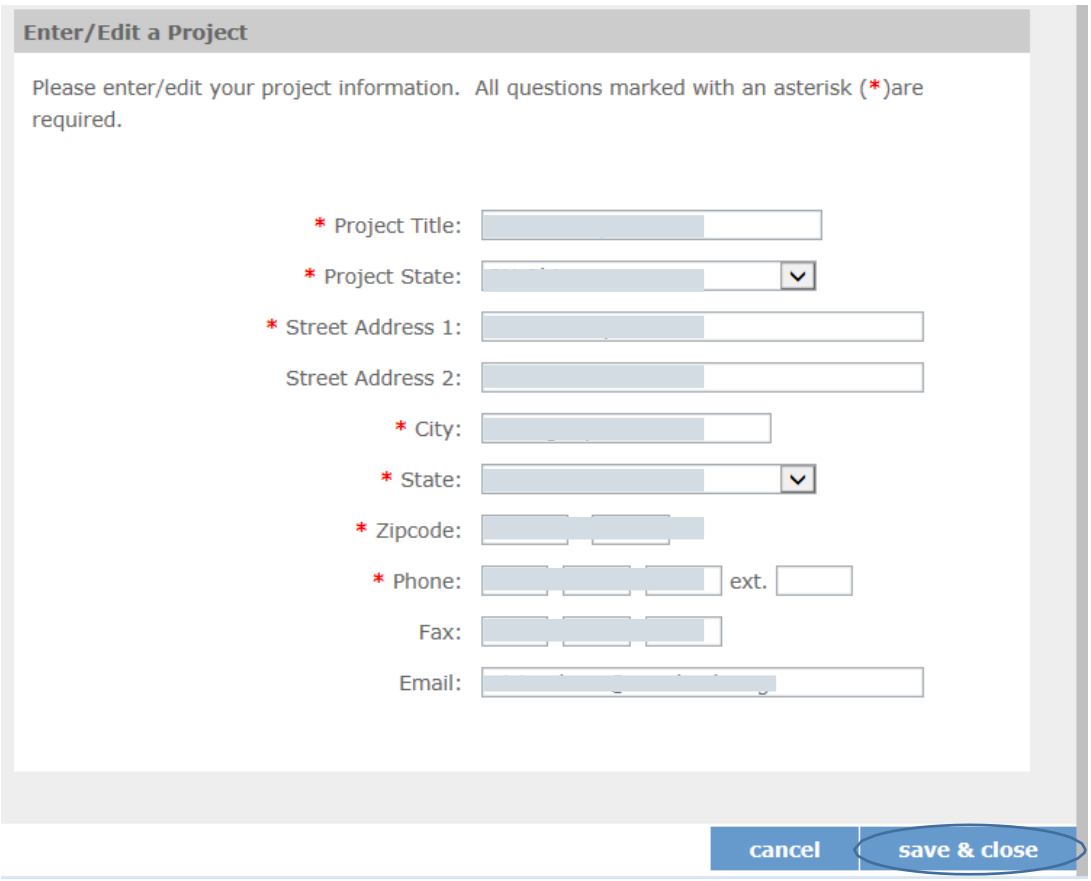
Step 6: Within the same *Project information* section, click **view/edit** under *project* to review and edit your project's contact information.



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**.



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.

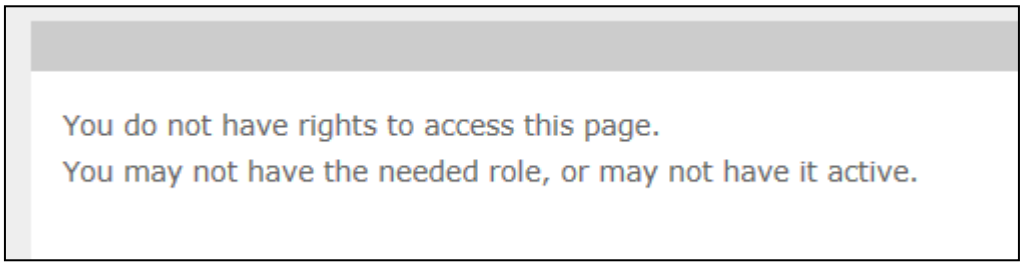
Possible Warnings and Errors

When making updates to your contact information, you may get one of the following warning or error

messages:

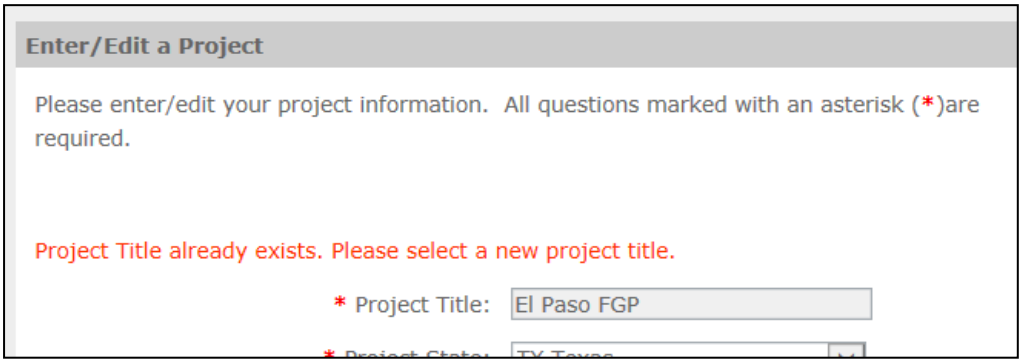
Error Message 1: You do not have rights to access this page.

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. 23 – 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
- 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

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

For more information:

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 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.
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.
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%.
13. *(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.
14. *(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.
15. *(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.

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.

For All Stations

Volunteer Supervisor [Station Staff]

Name:	**Title:**
Phone:	**Email:**

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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**? No_____Yes_____**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.

Driver's License #_____ State_____ Expiration Date____

AmeriCorps Seniors SCP/FGP provides a mileage reimbursement for travel between home and volunteer site to the volunteers. Will you be claiming a mileage reimbursement for travel to and from your volunteer location? **Yes**___ **No**__

If Yes, is a copy of your proof of auto insurance showing active coverage attached? Yes __ No_

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.

- 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: [**Original Signatures Required on the Form]**	ABC County FGP/SCP PO Box 123 Our Town, USA 12345	For Questions contact: Jane Doe (555) 555-1234 FGP/SCP.PD@abccounty.gov

The following information is optional and will not affect your enrollment with ABC County FGP/SCP.

1. Occasionally ABC County FGP/SCP will purchase volunteer recognition gifts to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Please share the size you would use on each item blow.

Item	Size	Item	Size	Item	Size
Jacket		Vest		Hoodie	
Sweatshirt		Hat		Shoe size (for snow cleats)	

2. Which show of appreciation would mean the most to you? (Check all that apply)

Specially arranged meals ☐	Gifts ☐	Certificates ☐
ABC FGP/SCP logo wear ☐	Being chosen as the volunteer of the month ☐	Being highlighted in the Newsletter ☐
Other (Make suggestion)		

3. AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP is often asked to provide demographical information pertaining to volunteer members. Please provide the following information (Optional).

Are you a Veteran? _____ Are you an active Military Member? _____

Are any of your family members actively serving in the military?
_____

(Optional) Gender:

____Male

____Female

(Optional) Race/Ethnic Background:

___White ___Asian ____African-American ____Hispanic/Latino

___American Indian/Alaska Native ___Pacific Islander ___Other

Thank you for the information you have provided. Your information is **never** sold, shared, or used outside of AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP, ABC County government or the AmeriCorps Seniors.

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 **Physical Address**: 123 State Street, Our Town, USA 81234
Telephone: (555) 555-1234 Fax: (555) 555-5555

Return to the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP/SCP Office by the 10th 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. **IMPORTANT! Please obtain your volunteer station supervisor's original signature before submitting!**
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							***For Office Use Only:*** **Mileage Reimbursement** _____ **miles X** _____ **per mile =** **Total Reimbursement:** **$**
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
TOTALS							

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 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 _____ **X** _____ **X**_____

Volunteer Signature **Date** **Station Supervisor Signature** **Date** **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;
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]

AmeriCorps Seniors

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: _____

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.	$
COLUMN TOTALS	$	$	$	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
(See back)	**$_____** Total per month	$ _____Total per year

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Total Household Annual Income: **$** _____

Minus total allowable medical expense deduction: – _____

Equals **Total Annual Qualifying Income:** **$** _____

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 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.*

VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE **DATE** **REVIEWED BY SPONSOR STAFF** **DATE**

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, strike benefits, training stipends, alimony, and military family allotments, or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
   (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.

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	
Note: *Staff should sign and date CHC section check boxes. Steps for completing NSCHC must be in project's written policy.*					

Training: *(Volunteers in training must be accompanied prior to CHC approval.)*

Location	Date	Time	Trainer/ Accompaniment

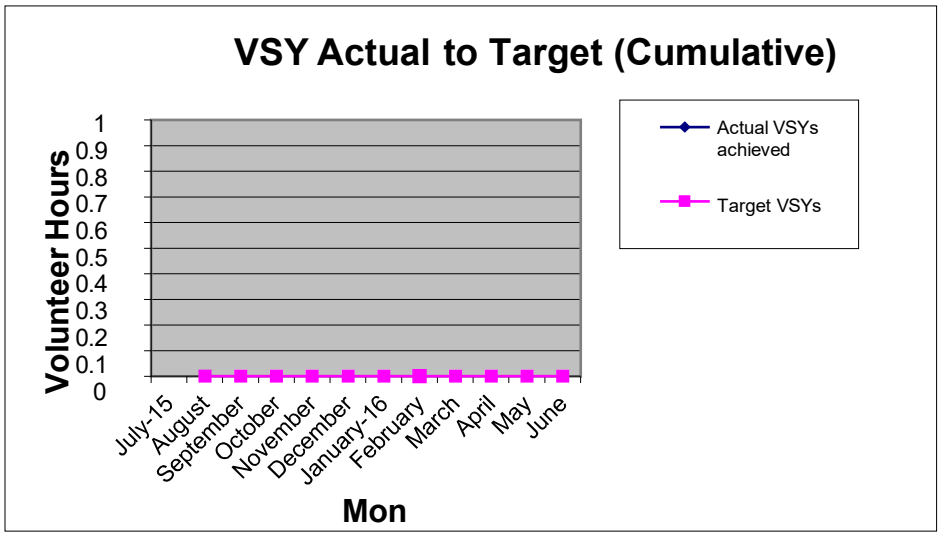
I have considered the results of the National Service Criminal History check in selecting this individual to serve.

Staff Signature: _____Date:_____

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					
TOTAL			0.00	0.00	0		
			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

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
Section 1							
Volunteer Document Checklist							
Section 2							
Volunteer Application Form							
** Income Eligibility							
Applicant Statement Background							
Address Certification Form							
Beneficiary Form							
Emergency Contact Form							
Volunteer Enrollment & Ins Form							
Volunteer Release Form/Media							
Section 3							
NSCHC Documentation Checklist							
NSCHC Component Assessment							
Fingerprints Taken							
Fingerprints Results							
Driver's License/Ins Card							
NSOPR							
State check (s)							
NSCHC Consent Form							
Murder Disclosure							
Section 4							
Confidentiality Agreement							
Appropriate/Inappropriate Activities							
** Performance Reviews							
Grievance Procedure Signature							
Handbook Received Signature							
Pre-Service Orientation Sign-In							

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

AmeriCorps Seniors

ABC Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program
Address
Phone:
Email address (or fax number):

Positive Tuberculosis (TB) Test Screening Form

Please fill out only if the volunteer has had a POSITIVE TB test in the past.

Date of Positive Test Results: _____

Was a chest X-ray done at that time: Yes No
If yes, was it normal? Yes No

Did volunteer receive anti-TB medication? Yes No
How long did they take it? _____

Date of last chest X-ray:_____ What was the result? _____

If **POSITIVE** within the last year has volunteer been treated for:

Unusual/persistent cough?	Yes	No
Coughing up blood?	Yes	No
Shortness of breath?	Yes	No
Persistent fever/chills?	Yes	No
Night sweats?	Yes	No
Unexplained weight loss?	Yes	No
Chronic fatigue?	Yes	No
Known TB exposure?	Yes	No

Comments and/or follow-up:

_____

_____

Health Professional Signature: _____Date:_____

Hospital/Clinic/Organization Name: _____

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?* 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 covert, she or he may still be eligible with the 20% increase of the income eligibility guideline.

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.[1] 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.

[1] 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.

Rev. February 2016

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 E.1 – Sample AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer in SCP Assignment Plan

Assignment Plan

Instructions: It is a federal requirement that all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP have an Assignment Plan for the clients with whom they are assigned to work. The clients they are assigned to must have documented a special need – defined as one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations – and be in need of assistance to maintain their highest level of independent living. The AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP is assigned to your organization to provide direct services to one or more eligible clients that result in person-to person supportive relationships with each client served.

Please complete all sections, documenting the client'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 SCP project office for approval.

The AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program recognizes and respects the confidentiality of all of the clients involved in the program. Please be assured that all of the information that you provide will only be used in aggregate and no specific client will be identified.

Client's Needs and Health Assessment:

☐ Blind/Visually Impaired ☐ Homebound/Living Alone

☐ Alzheimer's or other chronic disease ☐ Substance Abuse

☐ Mental Health Related Issue ☐ Respite

☐ Other, Describe: _____

_____

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer: _____ Volunteer Station/Site: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____phone/email___

Period this plan covers:_____

Client Information:

Client's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _/_____/_____

Male ☐/Female

Client is living in their own home? ☐ Yes or ☐ No Client is living with family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Activity will take place in home? ☐ or in a day program ☐ ? Client is a Veteran? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Hospice Care? ☐ Yes ☐ No Respite? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Activities planned with assigned client: Describe below the activities the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP will perform **(Please check all that apply)**

☐ Assist with meal prep and nutrition ☐ Transportation ☐ Walking
☐ Light Housekeeping ☐ Help pay bills ☐ Assist with dressing
☐ Accompany shopping ☐ Assist with ADL ☐ Doctor's Visits
☐ Accompany on errands ☐ Assist with medication ☐ Companionship
☐ Assist with reading or writing
☐Other _____
Description _____
_____
_____

Schedule- Day/Time:
Sun:_ Mon: _ Tues: _Wed. __ Thurs: _ Fri: ___ Sat:___

Expected Outcomes. How do you expect that the client and, in the case of respite care, caregivers will benefit for the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP's activities? Will the client…

☐ Feel less lonely and isolated? ☐ Be more socially engaged?
☐ Remain living in own home? ☐ Receive required medications on schedule?
☐ Benefit from improved nutrition?
☐ Be able to carry out activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, using the bathroom?
☐ Will caregivers be able to go to work/attend to personal affairs?
☐Other _____
Description _____
_____

Signatures:

I accept this assignment plan:

_____ _____
Signature: AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Date

_____ _____
Signature: Volunteer Station Representative Date

I approve this assignment plan:

_____ _____
Signature: AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Director Date

Instructions: AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer leaders in SCP with special skills or demonstrated leadership ability may perform indirect service, such as assisting newer AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP in performing their assignments or coordinating the activities of other AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in SCP. It is a federal requirement that all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer leaders in SCP have an assignment plan that identifies the roles and activities of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer leaders in SCP and the expected outcomes.

Please complete all sections, documenting the role and 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 SCP project office for approval.

Assignment Plan for a Senior Companion Leader

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer: _____

Service Schedule: _____

Volunteer Station/Site: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Period this plan covers: _____

A. Activities planned. Describe below the activities the Senior Companion leader will perform (For example, will the volunteer coach new Senior Companions in performing their work? Coordinate scheduling of other Senior Companions? Deliver training?):

B. Expected Outcomes. What are the expected results of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer leaders in SCP's activities? (For example, Will new AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers providing direct service more quickly adjust to their roles? Will the volunteer station be able to serve more clients? Will the volunteer station be able to serve clients with needs it was previously unable to meet?)

I accept this assignment plan:

Signature: AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer	Date
Signature: Volunteer Station Representative	Date

I approve this assignment plan:

Signature: AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Director	Date

Appendix E.2 – AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers in Senior Companion Program Position Descriptions

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Senior Companion Program serve adults with physical, emotional, or mental health limitations, especially older persons, in an effort to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Senior Companion Program serve 5 – 40 hours per week and involve person-to-person relationships with the individuals served.

Older adults with physical, emotional, or mental health limitations may face the following challenges:

- Early institutionalization of homebound adults who need outside assistance;
- Release from residential health-care facilities without home care (especially acute care hospitals);
- Need care for the aged to prevent institutionalization;
- Need assistance for terminally ill persons.

Some appropriate activities AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Senior Companion Program may be involved in include:

Personal Care:

1. Feeding, dressing, grooming.
2. Assisting client with walking, getting out of bed, getting to bathroom.
3. Assisting with medical or physical therapy and/or monitoring medication.
4. Accompanying a person to a doctor or nurse for treatment.
5. Providing grief support.
6. Assisting in reality orientation/awareness.
7. Encouraging exercise, providing information on exercise or recreation.

Nutrition:

1. Preparing food, planning meals, light grocery shopping, labeling/organizing food.
2. Providing health or nutrition information.
3. Accompanying client to a nutrition site.

Social/Recreation:

1. Providing companionship, talking, listening, cheering up, playing games/cards, etc.
2. Providing peer support.
3. Fostering client contact with family and friends.
4. Accompanying client to a recreational or social event.

Home Management:

1. Light shopping, doing errands.
2. Writing letters, reading, and filling out forms.
3. Doing light housekeeping.
4. Doing light gardening.
5. Making non-strenuous home repairs/weatherization improvements.

Respite Care:

1. Assisting homebound clients to temporarily relieve caretaker burden.

Appendix E.3 – Previous Change Logs

This table lists all changes made in the 2022 versions of this document. See **SCP- Previous Change Logs 2017-2021** for a full list of changes from January 2017 to 2021.

Edits made in (January 2022)	**Version 2022.1**	
Change Number	**Chapter and Page Number**	**Change**
1	This change is not related to a specific chapter.	• Update links throughout document. AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors resources are in the process of being transferred from NationalService.gov to AmeriCorps.gov.
2	Appendix A. 22	• Added Review and Update Contact Information in eGrants
3	Appendix D.3	• Shifted changes report from 2017 to 2021into FGP Change Logs 2017-2022. All current changes for 2022 will be logged in Appendix D. 5 Change Log.
4	Chapter 2: Project Operations (PG 20)	• Updated prohibited activities to include abortion services.

Edits made in (May 2022)	**Version 2022.2**	
Change Number	**Chapter and Page Number**	**Change**
1	This change is not related to a specific chapter.	• Update links throughout document. AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors resources have been transferred from NationalService.gov to AmeriCorps.gov. As documents and pages are updated, this document is also updated.
2	Chapter 4 Community Participation (PG 34)	• Add link to Appendix A. 23 Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils
3	Appendix A. 23	• Added Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Councils

Edits made in (July 2022)	**Version 2022.3**	
Change Number	**Chapter and Page Number**	**Change**
1	This change is not related to a specific chapter.	• Update links throughout document. AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors resources have been transferred from NationalService.gov to AmeriCorps.gov. As documents and pages are updated, this document is also updated.
2	Chapter 1 (PG 11)	• Added Mange your grant as resource to section Where can I find training and technical assistance information. • Added question and answer: Where can I find my Notice of Grant Award (NGA)?
3	Chapter 1 (PG 13-14)	• Updated description of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program grantee page • Added Evaluations Resources section with description • Updated Code field for Litmos. ACS-FGP replaces SC-FGP. ACS- RSVP from SC-RSVP, and ACS-SCP from SC-SCP.
4	Chapter 3 (PG 27)	• Added link to six-model National Performance Measurement Core Curriculum series.
5	Chapter 4 (PG 34)	• Updated link to Building an Effective Advisory Council
6	Chapter 10 (PG 87-88)	• Updated link to 45 CFR 2552.93(b) and 45 CFR 2552.46(f)
7	Chapter 10 (PG 100-101)	• Updated Steps in Setting up a PMS account • Removed statement about Portfolio Managers can log on to the PMS directly. Added guidance for receiving PMS support and guidance.
8	Chapter 14 (PG 127)	• Updated editable Word and Excel formats are posted on the Foster Grandparent webpage.
9	Appendix	• Added Senior Demonstrations Program (SDP) to Appendixes.

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